UP THE STEPS

TO COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH

THE WRITING PROCESS

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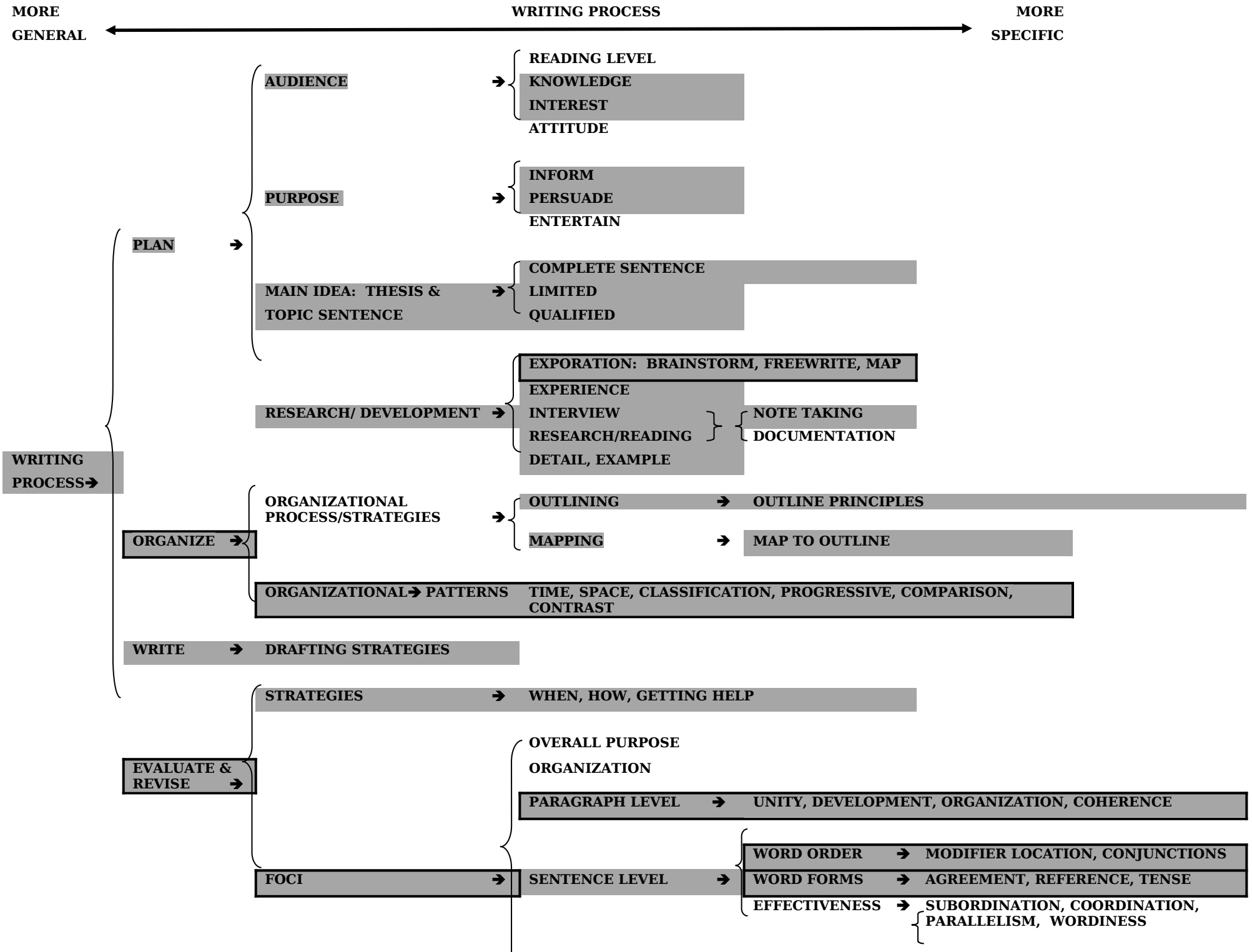
NTRODUCTION: THE WRITING PROCESS—THE ROLES OF THINKING AND WRITING

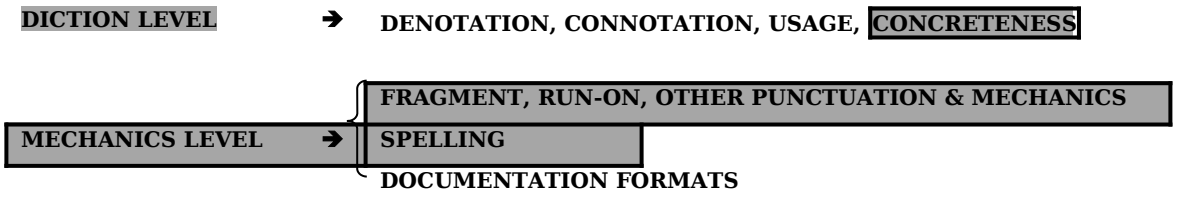
THE GOAL OF THIS INTRODUCTION IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- ***Identify the five main steps in the writing process***
- ***Understand the roles of writing and thinking in both college and business writing***

STEPS OF THE WRITING PROCESS

Writing is an activity that involves many parts. The activity is some ways is like driving a car. Like an experienced driver, an experienced writer is at the same time aware of many different elements of the activity. But writing is also like building a house—a process that involves several separate steps, each of which must be taken in a certain order and with a specific goal in mind. A builder cannot install cabinets before walls are completed—at least not without causing major problems in the process. So a writer must complete the different steps in the most efficient order. And a builder must keep in mind the end goal—the house that the prospective owner has imagined—the house that has been specified in architectural drawings and images. So a writer must keep in mind the reader and the effect that the writer want to have on that reader. A complete course in writing covers all the steps of the process. But in some courses will cover some of the portions of the process in more details that others. On the next page is a diagram that gives an overview of the whole process with emphasis on the elements covered by this book. The elements that are given the most emphasis are the ones inside the dark borders. The other covered elements are the ones in the shaded areas.


MORE GENERAL
WRITING PROCESS
MORE SPECIFIC
WRITING PROCESS
PLAN
AUDIENCE
READING LEVEL
KNOWLEDGE
INTEREST
ATTITUDE
PURPOSE
INFORM
PERSUADE
ENTERTAIN
MAIN IDEA: THESIS & TOPIC SENTENCE
COMPLETE SENTENCE
LIMITED
QUALIFIED
RESEARCH/ DEVELOPMENT
EXPORATION: BRAINSTORM, FREEWRITE, MAP
EXPERIENCE
INTERVIEW
RESEARCH/READING
DETAIL, EXAMPLE
NOTE TAKING
DOCUMENTATION
ORGANIZE
ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS/STRATEGIES
OUTLINING
OUTLINE PRINCIPLES
MAPPING
MAP TO OUTLINE
ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS
TIME, SPACE, CLASSIFICATION, PROGRESSIVE, COMPARISON, CONTRAST
WRITE
DRAFTING STRATEGIES
STRATEGIES
WHEN, HOW, GETTING HELP
EVALUATE & REVISE
OVERALL PURPOSE
ORGANIZATION
PARAGRAPH LEVEL
UNITY, DEVELOPMENT, ORGANIZATION, COHERENCE
FOCI
SENTENCE LEVEL
WORD ORDER
MODIFIER LOCATION, CONJUNCTIONS
WORD FORMS
AGREEMENT, REFERENCE, TENSE
EFFECTIVENESS
SUBORDINATION, COORDINATION, PARALLELISM, WORDINESS


DICTION LEVEL
➔
DENOTATION, CONNOTATION, USAGE, CONCRETENESS
MECHANICS LEVEL
➔
FRAGMENT, RUN-ON, OTHER PUNCTUATION & MECHANICS
SPELLING
DOCUMENTATION FORMATS

PROCESSES OF WRITING AND READING

Reading and writing are both processes. Both reading and writing require several steps before, during, and after what most people consider reading and writing. The following table gives a comparison of the five steps that make up each process. In writing the steps are followed in the same order as given here. In reading, the planning and organizing are pre-reading activities and the evaluating, revising, and responding can be done during or after reading.

STEPS	WRITING	READING		
PLAN/ [& Pre-write]	[Explore a topic through some prewriting activity, if needed.] Identify the thesis, the readers (by reading level and knowledge of, interest in and attitude toward the subject), and the objective (inform, persuade, entertain, or a combination of these).	Identify at least the main subject of the piece, the purpose of the writer, and appropriateness of these to the reader's purpose and schema.		
ORGANIZE	OUTLINE: Group ideas and then order items within groups and order groups.	PREVIEW: Identify major sections and, if possible, organizational method and major terms.		
WRITE/ WORK THROUGH	Write a quick rough draft based on the above two steps. Do NOT evaluate or revise while writing.	READ: Work through the piece with the other four steps in mind.		
EVALUATE	Evaluate each element of the draft, starting with the largest elements (e.g., purpose and organization) and working to the smallest elements (e.g., punctuation and spelling).	**Repeat evaluation and revision steps until satisfied**	DURING READING: Evaluate understanding of the piece, particularly of links between ideas.	AFTER READING: Evaluate understanding and value of the piece. Take notes, make outline, summarize.
REVISE/ RESPOND	REWRITE: When a complete reading of the draft identifies an element (e.g., paragraph construction) revise that before evaluating for smaller elements.		DURING READING: Revise understanding if it can be done quickly. Otherwise note problem areas.	AFTER READING: Return to difficult part(s) to work out relationship between the part(s) and the whole piece and other resources. RESPOND to ideas and connect them to schema.

PREWRITING—THE ROLE OF THINKING

“Writing is the act of discovering. . . . We don’t know what we think until we put it into words.”

--Garrison Keillor

The writing that people do for college classes and for business purposes demands many skills. In addition to skills in the mechanics of writing (spelling, grammar, and punctuation), college and business writers must become critical thinkers--that is, they must think for themselves. ***Critical thinking*** can be defined as a reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe and do (Robert H. Ennis). Employers highly prize an employee who can think critically. College instructors structure many of their assignments to encourage students to practice critical thinking. In both college and business, the most challenging assignments require "reasonable, reflective thinking." This thinking requires that we acquire accurate information and interpret that information according to logic and the principles of specific fields of endeavor. For example, a nurse must take and record a patient’s vital signs, compare and interpret the readings, and decide what action is needed. An accountant gathers appropriate financial data, organizes it in a meaningful way, draws conclusions about a company’s financial health, and reports that information to her employer. A social worker could be assigned to interview a child, the child's parents, and people who have had contact with them. Then he would need to interpret and compare the information from the interviews and make a recommendation on the care or custody of the child.

As you can see, the jobs of all three of these people require that they do three things:

1. Acquire accurate information,
2. Interpret information according to logic and the principles of the specific field of endeavor, and
3. Draw conclusions based upon the information, logic, and the principles of the field.

Most of those who graduate from college end up working on practical tasks like those of the nurse, accountant, and social worker. Even if one is assigned responsibility for larger decisions--ones that will affect lives of many, the same basic skills are needed. The major difference is that more information may be gathered from reading than from personal information gathering.

Furthermore, the same critical thinking skills that make a person a success in a profession also makes one a success in personal life. We all want to make good choices: ones that benefit us; benefit our families, friends, and neighbors; and benefit our whole society. Such choices require that our judgment not be clouded by faulty information, by superstitious or biased beliefs, or a narrow perspective on life. To avoid these problems we need the same three skills required by a profession: to acquire accurate information, to interpret the information, and to draw reasonable conclusions from the information.

The purpose of many college courses is to prepare us for life and business decisions by teaching us how to think critically and how to use the standards of analysis and judgment of various disciplines. The work of writing a research paper for a college class requires the same skills of collecting information and drawing conclusions as a professional position does. Although each field of study and each profession has its specific methods and standards, basic thinking skills underlie them all. Consequently, the writing assignments in this book will focus on those skills required by the writing jobs most people have to do in their education and in their careers.

THE ROLES OF WRITING

Though all professionals are expected to think for themselves, writing may play different roles in different professions. In some professions decisions and recommendations may not always be reported in writing. For example, a nurse may make some reports orally. An accountant may make reports with spreadsheets. An architect may make reports through architectural drawings. In most professions, however--even nursing, accounting, and architecture--writing frequently plays a crucial role. In those most professions and in college, we will find that writing plays two roles in the “prewriting” part of the process and two more roles in the rest of the writing process.

“PREWRITING” ROLES

- Recording information

  Many professions rely on workers' full and accurate record of information. For example, nurses and police officers must provide detailed records of what they observed and did.

- Exploring our thinking about the information

  Exploration of thinking through writing is a part of the process that others seldom see. This step of writing is sometimes called prewriting, free writing, or brainstorming. For most writers it is a necessary step to get from the record of details to the following roles of writing. This step includes considering all the possible interpretations of information and judging which interpretation seems most reasonable. When completed, this step will provide lead us to our ***conclusion***, our main idea that is supported with reasons.

WRITING ROLES

- Explaining our conclusions and thinking to others

  Any professional who has to explain a process or idea to others has to be able to make a clear presentation of connections between ideas and details. For example, a human resource professional has to explain company policies to new employees. A veteran accountant has to explain a company's accounting procedures to new accountants. A social worker has to explain social service procedures to new clients.

- Convincing others of the reasonableness of our conclusions

  The most difficult challenge for most writers is convincing others that the thinking that supports a conclusion is reasonable. All sales and marketing programs involve a heavy dose of convincing. Any employee making a proposal to those who make the company's decisions must sell the proposal by making it seem the most reasonable course of action. Lawyers and judges are constantly defending the reasoning behind their positions.

Most college classes emphasize these skills in preparation for the demands of life and the work world. Some disciplines put more emphasis on different elements of writing. In the sciences, for example, the scientific method stresses full and accurate recording of information. In the humanities the details are not unimportant, but exploring our thinking becomes more a more central part of the process. Most classes, particularly the more advanced ones, require that we can explain our thinking and convince others of its reasonableness.

MAJOR SKILLS EMPHASIZED IN WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

The writing assignments in this book provide practice in developing the major skills we need in order to master the roles of writing both in college and in our employment. Although some of these skills are more important for mastering certain roles of writing, they are all necessary parts of writing:

- Limiting a topic
- Using concrete description, including comparisons
- Generating possible inferences from specific details
- Generating and evaluating general inferences
- Using clear organization and transitional devices

Each of the assignments gives very specific instructions on how to write about the assigned topics. The instructions do not cover all the possible methods of writing about each topic, but they do cover the most common and most useful ones. If you master the skills outlined in this book, they will provide you with an assortment of handy tools for writing about a wide range of topics. When you write about different topics for other classes and write on the job, you may have to adapt these instructions. But the general skills listed above will always be important.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Chapters 18 through 21 focus on the "prewriting" roles of writing: recording information and exploring our thinking about the information. These jobs are the kinds that both academics and professionals do when they collect information and interpret the information. Since these jobs are similar to scientific explorations, these assignments are called EXPLORATIONS. Chapters 21 through 26 focus on the last two jobs, explaining our conclusions and convincing others of them. Since these jobs are like those that academics and professionals do when they report and support their conclusions to others, these chapters are called CONCLUSIONS.

Throughout the book the term ***conclusion*** means the main idea or opinion that we have drawn from reasons. Thus the terms ***conclusion***, ***main idea***, and ***reasoned opinion*** will be used to mean the same thing. Although the term *opinion* often is used to refer to an automatic response to a situation, here we use *reasoned opinion* to

distinguish critical thinking from an automatic response. The two kinds of automatic responses that are quite different from a reasoned opinion are *matters of personal taste* (feelings of personal like or dislike—e.g. “rap music is good”) and *matters of fact* (ideas that can determined by the senses or by reference to reliable documents—e.g. “that tree has red leaves” or “the Constitution of the United States was ratified in 1789”).

Chapters 21 through 26, which focus on drawing and supporting conclusions, progress through the same subjects as the exploratory chapters. Then they tackle the more difficult tasks of combining information from our own observation and memory with information gathered from other sources—reading and interviews.

CHAPTER 18: EXPLORING IDEAS ABOUT OBJECTS

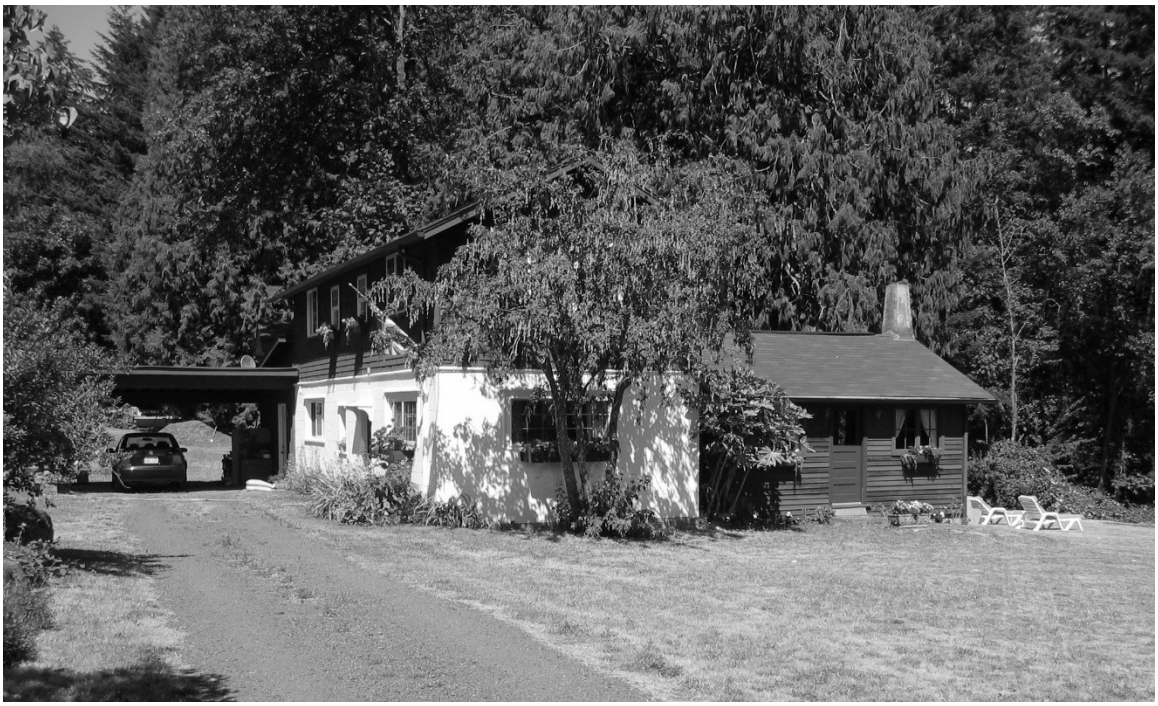


Figure 18-1

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THE GOAL OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- Focus observation on specific, frequently overlooked details of common objects
- Record observations in accurate, specific, and concrete vocabulary
- Use comparisons to enhance readers' understanding of your observations
- Provide multiple inferences about a common object based upon your observation of each detail

- Organize a description according to a spatial pattern
- Provide a brief introduction to the topic and transitions to connect parts of a spatially organized description

REASONS FOR THESE ASSIGNMENTS

The topic for writing in this chapter is a building--either a commercial building or a house. Your job is to describe the building as completely as you can and to record as many insights about the building as possible. Though this may seem a strange topic, it is very similar to thinking tasks required in numerous academic disciplines. Here are some examples of people in those disciplines:

- **Anthropologists**, particularly archeologists, frequently examine and analyze artifacts--objects made and used by people. Their goal is to make inferences about a people's way of life, their activities, their values, and individuals' relationships with others in their family or class and with other classes, with their whole society, and with nature.

- **Artists** observe the arrangement of color, line, value, and mass in a painting to understand the effect that another artist's technique has achieved.

- **Literary critics** note the characteristics of objects that literary characters produce or involve themselves with in order to interpret what is happening in the characters' internal life--their thoughts, feelings, hopes, dreams.

- **Environmental scientists** study subtle changes in forms, sizes, and health of plants and animals to determine the possible effects of pollution on an ecosystem.

- **Geologists** analyze colors, hardness, and crystal structure of minerals to determine the history of the formation of landmasses.

HISTORICAL NOTE: All scientists rely in many ways on clear perception of details and on logical interpretation of those details. For example, in the Eighteenth Century, French chemist Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier made an important contribution to the advancement of geology. His attention to accumulations of rock, shells, sand, and mud along the shore led him to formulate a reliable rule about where these items accumulate in relation to sea level. His further recognition that the same arrangements of materials were found well above the present sea level led him to the conclusion that sea level had been higher in earlier geological periods.

In the work world careful attention to detail is just as important. Employers prize employees who observe subtle details and make sound decisions or recommendations based on their observations. Here are some examples of those professions:

- **Doctors**, **nurses**, and other **healthcare professionals** need to be alert to sometimes indistinct physical symptoms of problems that can threaten a patient's health or life.

- **Buyers** for retail stores need to pay attention to the small details of a product's materials, color, and construction to determine whether it is worth purchasing.

- **Real estate appraisers** need to notice telltale signs of a building's condition--the surface of paint, feel of wood, cracks in plaster, etc.--to determine the value of the building.

THINKING ABOUT IT: ACQUIRING AND INTERPRETING INFORMATION

Effective thinking and writing require that we gather accurate information and interpret that information. To gather accurate information requires the ability to observe things as they really are (not as we assume them to be) and to notice the seemingly insignificant details which may later lead to an important discovery. To keep the information from later escaping us, we also need to record it in accurate and specific detail. These are the abilities that lead to Lavoisier's discovery that sea level changes over long periods of

time. These activities are not just the territory of the scientist. Brian Boyd, an English professor, and Kurt Johnson, a lepidopterist (expert on butterflies), talk about how these skills enhanced noted novelist Vladimir Nabokov's contributions to both fiction and the study of butterflies:

> Nabokov's lifelong devotion to lepidoptera [butterflies] did more for his fiction than offer bit parts to butterflies. In deepening certain inclination in his mind, it also helped shape his literary style and strategies. Nabokov had an unmatched eye for detail--a gesture, a trick of light, a shade of color, any kind of natural object ("rusty, greenish hydrangeas," to take one example among thousands)--and an unmatched sense of design, especially in the complex interlacements of recurring details that surely reflect the training in the particular (and in the intricacies of natural relationships) that he needed in the field when collecting and in the laboratory when dissecting. He drew scenes of extraordinary vividness and invited us to observe them with an alertness far different from the way so many take the world for granted. His writing shows that attention to detail, far from involving a mere passive recording of what we see, instead requires an active imagination.

Making active attention to details a habit of mind will enhance our ability to collect information, interpret the information, and, in the end, draw better conclusions from the information. To record the information in sharp detail we will need one of Nabokov's skills, a preference for the specific, concrete description, like the example of the "rusty, greenish hydrangeas."

RECORDING INFORMATION: CONCRETE DETAILS

In the exploratory papers the focus will be on finding relevant detail and recording it for future use. In all of these assignments, we will work on recording concrete details that will be helpful for future evaluation and for drawing conclusions. The first several papers will focus on generating and reporting details from personal observation—using our senses of sight, hearing, touch, etc. The last assignment will focus on recording concrete details from memory. We all need the skill of careful observation before we can begin to draw conclusions from our experience.

CONCRETE VS. ABSTRACT

At first, concrete details may not be easy to distinguish from other details. When we use the term ***concrete*** to describe details, we are referring to those details that are easily noticed by the senses--sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. The opposite of *concrete* is ***abstract***; abstract details are

more easily comprehended by the mind rather than by the senses. Most details can be placed on a scale from concrete to abstract. For example, we could arrange the following random list of terms in order of most concrete to most abstract: *bird, gray-wing gull, shorebird, living thing, seagull*. The term that would give us the clearest mental image would be *gray-wing gull*. So it would be the most concrete. The most abstract term in the list would be *living thing* because determining whether a thing is a *living* thing sometimes requires a great deal of thought. Placing all the words in a sequence from concrete to abstract would give us the following list: *gray-wing gull, seagull, shorebird, bird*, and *living thing.* Although the ability to organize such a list is not particularly useful, it does help us to focus on concreteness of the terms we use.

SPECIFIC VS. GENERAL

Another distinction that is very similar to that between *concrete* and *abstract* is the distinction between *specific* and *general*. ***Specific*** refers to a term or statement that is limited, and ***general*** refers to a term or statement that is broad. For example, you are just one college student, so if you made a statement about just your experience in college, the statement would be very specific. If you broadened it to include all the students in your writing class, perhaps about 25 students, the statement would be more general. You could continue to make the statement even broader, and more general, if you included all the students at your college, all the college students in your state, all the college students in your country, or even all the college students in the world. Usually concrete terms will be more specific and abstract ones will be more general. However, sometimes choosing the most concrete term will not mean choosing the most specific.

The following exercises are designed to help you think about the concreteness of the terms you use in your writing. Sometimes your answers may vary from your classmates' and from your instructor's. Sometimes the difference is a matter of differing experiences with a term, sometimes, a matter of differing definitions of a term, and sometimes a distinction between concepts of *concrete* and *specific*.

CONCRETE WORD EXERCISE 1

INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the 20 following lists of words, write the most concrete and most abstract words in the blanks to the right of the lists.

WORDS	***CONCRETE***	***ABSTRACT***
1. clothing, jeans, pants, garment, Levi's 501s		
2. meat, pork, food, pork chop, nutrition		
3. CBS Evening News, TV, CBS, communication		
4. curriculum, education, learning, course, English Composition		
5. fever, disease, Hong Kong flu, flu		
6. Riverside Apartments, structure, buildings, apartments		
7. Honda, Accord, car, conveyance, vehicle		
8. oolong tea, drink, tea, liquid		
9. language, English, American English, communication		
10. publication, book*, American Heritage Dictionary*, dictionary		
11. blue, color, primary color, sky blue		
12. woman, person, Mom, female relative		
13. living will, document, will, paper		
14. disaster, bad thing, Mt. St. Helen's eruption, volcanic eruption		
15. senator, Senator Bradley, citizen, politician		

16. Safeway, commerce, retailer, grocery store		
17. vacation lot, place, real estate, lot		
18. headache, pain, discomfort, migraine		
19. bad, criminal, illegal, wrongful		
20. useful, good, beneficial, nutritious		

CONCRETE WORD EXERCISE 2

INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the 20 following lists of words, write the most concrete and most abstract words in the blanks to the right of the lists.

WORDS	***CONCRETE***	***ABSTRACT***
1. periodical, magazine, publication, *Time* magazine		
2. walk, step, strut, go, travel		
3. tree, vegetation, maple, Japanese maple, Japanese lace-leaf maple		
4. institution, college, community college, Tacoma Community College		
5. car, van, Voyager, motor vehicle, vehicle		
6. produce, build, construct, erect, make		
7. professor, person, school employee, educator, teacher		
8. doctor, Dr. C. Everett Koop, physician, surgeon, healthcare professional		
9. bright, vivid, colorful, international orange		
10. aircraft, Boeing 747, *Spirit of St. Louis*, plane, transportation		
11. usefulness, safety, security, nest, refuge		
12. food, bread, sustenance, grain product, bagel		
13. Englishman, European, Londoner, Caucasian, human		
14. water, Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic Ocean, ocean, salt water		
15. apple, fruit, nourishment, Granny Smith, snack		

16. Interstate 5, way, road, freeway, route		
17. TV program, electronic medium, Cosby Show, situation comedy		
18. animal, Lassie, dog, pet, collie, canine		
19. cola, soft drink, beverage, Pepsi, Pepsi One		
20. crawling thing, spider, arachnid, bug, tarantula		

RECORDING INFORMATION: COMPARISONS

One important way of vividly reporting concrete information is through comparisons. ***Comparison***, a close relative of analogy and simile, is merely pointing out a similarity between the thing we are describing and a thing with which readers are already familiar. Comparisons give us a way of reporting a host of concrete details in just a few words. For example, you could search for names of specific colors a bird's flashy plumage and not find any that really describe the combination of colors that you see. Or you could say that the plumage ranges through the oranges and reds of a brilliant sunset. Similarly, you could spend several paragraphs describing the way in which a piece of machinery moves, or you could say that it bobs up and down like bird drinking from a birdbath. Throughout the assignments we will practice using comparisons that communicate sharp images. These sharp images are often critical for readers' understanding of what we actually observed.

INTERPRETING INFORMATION: INFERENCES

Information that is not interpreted is meaningless. It is not enough to notice a specific detail. We need to take the next step and consider the possible inferences. Making an ***inference*** is drawing a connection between a fact and an opinion. In each inference we have at least one reason for our opinion. Thus these opinions are not what many people call "just opinions" but "reasoned opinions," opinions for which we can provide reasons. We are constantly making inferences, sometimes quite simple ones and at other times more complicated ones. In some situations, we can draw an opinion from just one concrete detail (fact). For example, if you stopped in front of a friend's house at night and saw no lights on, you might infer that no one was at home. This is a very simple inference. However, if you were responding to your friend's invitation to dinner, you would probably look for more information before concluding that no one is at home. In that case you might notice that his car is gone and that no one responds to the doorbell. Then you have multiple details (facts) on which to base your opinion. This inference would be a more complete one. In the exploratory papers, we will be working on drawing as many simple inferences as possible from the details we have observed. Since these papers are designed to explore a subject, we need to consider alternative inferences from each detail. For example, if you see no lights on in your friend's house, you could infer that he was not at home, that he had gone to bed early, or that he had decided to watch TV in a back room with the lights off. What other possibilities come to mind? Try to explore the possibilities and not limit yourself to one opinion for each detail.

Later, in the section about reporting, the paragraph assignments will require that we develop broader, more complete inferences, ones based on a series of details that we have collected, organized, and linked to our opinion. (See chapters 21-26.)

INFERENCE EXERCISE

INSTRUCTIONS: For each set of three statements, circle the number of the best inference. At this stage in the writing process, one inference can be better than another because it uses more concrete details, expresses a clearer or more reasonable connection between the detail and the opinion, or provides more than one reasonable opinion.

Set 1:
1. The paint on the siding makes this house look old.
2. The condition of the paint on this house makes it look very old.
3. The cracking paint on this house makes it look 50 years old.

Set 2:
1. The blocks and toy trucks on the porch imply that the people living here have young children or take care of others' children.
2. The blocks and toy trucks on the porch imply that young children live in this house.
3. The toys on the front porch of this house imply that some young children live here.

Set 3:
1. The lack of dandelions in the lawn shows that the people in this house take pride in their yard.
2. The beautiful condition of the lawn shows that the people in this house take pride in their yard.
3. The beautiful condition of the lawn shows that the people in this house must use dangerous weed killers on the lawn.

Set 4:
1. The boat on the trailer in the carport tells me that this family likes boating.
2. The boat on the trailer in the carport tells me that this family could like fishing or water skiing.
3. The 16-foot boat on the trailer in the carport tells me that this family could like fishing, water skiing, or boat camping.

Set 5:
1. The lack of weeds in the tulip bed shows that the people in this house are avid gardeners or that a yard service has just worked on this flowerbed.

2. The clean tulip bed shows that the people in this house are avid gardeners or that a yard service has just worked on this flowerbed.
3. The lack of weeds in the tulip bed shows that the people in this house are avid gardeners.

Set 6:

1. The freezer on the side porch of this house suggests that the residents are short of space inside the house.
2. The freezer on the side porch of this house suggests that the residents are short of space inside the house or are trying to save electricity by keeping the freezer in a cool place.
3. The freezer on the side porch of this house suggests that the residents are short of space inside the house or are just a little strange.

Set 7:

1. The broken TV antenna on the top of this house indicates that the homeowners now rely on cable TV.
2. The broken TV antenna on the top of this house indicates that the homeowners now rely on cable TV or don't watch TV enough to motivate them to repair the antenna.
3. The fact that the TV antenna lies on its side, no longer attached to the chimney, indicates that the homeowners now rely on cable TV or don't watch TV enough to motivate them to repair the antenna.

Set 8:

1. The fact that the lower part of the door is a dull color indicates that its varnish has been worn away by wind and rain.
2. The condition of the front door shows that it has suffered at the hands of nature.
3. The condition of the front door shows that it has suffered damage caused by rain.

GUIDELINES FOR EXPLORATORY PAPERS

Unless your instructor gives your different directions, each exploratory paper should follow the following standards.

SAFETY

The exploratory papers are ones that invite you to go out into the world to explore interesting places and people. Before you go, though, you should be concerned with choosing a safe place to take notes for your assignments.

You may find an interesting house to describe, but it may not be safe to loiter about to describe it. You may find an intriguing person to observe, but he or she may not appreciate your attention. To avoid dangerous situation, pick times and places that are both interesting and safe. For example, when you describe your choice of a building, you could choose to do so from a friend's or relative's living room. When you describe a person, you could choose a friend, a relative, or even an instructor at your college. PLAY IT SAFE.

LENGTH

600-1500 words (about 2-5 typed, double-spaced pages)

FORMAT

- Double space (skip every other line)
- Use a standard, black 12-point font
- Leave 1-inch margins on sides, top, and bottom

ROUGH AND FINAL DRAFTS

Hand in at least one rough draft and a clean final copy. “Clean” means as free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors as you know how to make it.

EXPLORING A BUILDING

The purpose of these assignments is to observe clearly and objectively and to make reasonable judgments instead of stating assumptions.

LIMIT THE TOPIC.

Limit the description to what you can see of the building from one vantage point on the outside of the building. You may include anything of the interior of the building that you can see from your outside vantage point.

CONTENT

Provide a clear description of the building. Provide concrete details that enable a reader to picture what you see. Use comparisons whenever they will reduce the number of words you use or whenever it will clarify what you mean. Go beyond the surface of the building by making inferences about what is unseen--the past or the future of the building or the feelings, values, ideas, etc. of the people who own, live in, work in, or frequent the building. When you think of an inference, try to imagine alternative interpretations of the detail you are examining.

- **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Concrete, specific details (not abstract or general ones) E.g., "A *two-inch-wide* trim board runs along the edge of the roof, and its *lavender* color clashes with the *orange* of the rock walls."

- **COMPARISONS:** What does it look LIKE? E.g., “Near the southwest corner of the building, the lavender paint is peeling like a bad case of sunburn."

- **INFERENCES**:What specific details lead you to believe something. E.g., "The peeling paint gives the impression that the college has no money for repairs or that no one here cares about the appearance of the buildings."

USE A SPATIAL ORGANIZATION.

Clear organization is essential for a reader's understanding of our details. If we read someone else's writing, we have to rely on that writer's sense of organization. If we read something that we have written some time ago, we have to rely on the sense of organization that we had when we recorded our observations. To describe an object, like a house or building, we can usually make good use of ***spatial*** organization. This organization follows the actual physical organization of the object that we are describing. For example, in describing an exterior view of a house, we could use the pattern that we are familiar with from reading--top to bottom and left to right. First, we would describe everything that extends above the roof line--e.g., chimney, TV antenna, vent pipes. We would organize these items in a left-to-right order. We could then move down to the roof itself and describe it in a left-to-right order. Then we could move lower--to the second floor--and do the same. On the first floor we would follow the same pattern. Finally, starting at the left and moving to the right, we could describe the items on the ground near the house.

Normally readers can better follow a description and picture the parts of an object if we begin with a general description of its size, shape, and construction. Also identifying the vantage point from which we are viewing an object can help readers to create a clear mental image. So, before you launch into the description of the building, begin with a short description of its size, shape, and construction and your vantage point. Then begin the detailed description in a spatial organization. Organize the details in one of these orders:

- from top to bottom
- from bottom to top
- from left to right
- from right to left
- a combination of two of these

In describing most buildings a top-to-bottom order or bottom-to-top order makes most sense to most people because top-to-bottom order is the one we use in reading and bottom-to-top order is the one that builders generally use in construction a building. However, because of the peculiarities of the building (or other object) that you may be describing, other orders or combination of orders may make better sense. Choose a pattern that makes it easy to lead your readers through the details.

PROVIDE TRANSITIONS.

To help readers picture your building, make a special effort to identify the starting point of your description. For example, you could begin the details by saying, "Beginning at the highest point on the left side of the house, I see a smoke-stained red brick chimney." Also, each time you move from one part of the building to another, explain clearly where you are going. For example, if your next detail is two feet to the right of the window you have just described, just say, "Two feet to the right of the window is a wire dangling from a knob, which . . . ."

Figure 18-2

EXPLORATION 1: AN ASSIGNED BUILDING

TOPIC

Describe one building or house assigned by your instructor. The building may be in a photograph or may be a real building. If it is a real building, limit the description to what you can see of the building from one vantage point on the outside of the building. Do not enter it or walk around to describe other sides.

EXPLORATION 1 CHECKLIST

1. PLAN

- **DUE DATE IS _____**
- **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
- **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the description to what you can see of the building from one vantage point on the outside of the building.

2. ORGANIZE

- Begin with a general description of the size, shape, and construction of the building.
- State the vantage point from which you are viewing the building.
- Use a SPATIAL organization for the details.

3. WRITE—INCLUDE

- **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Concrete, specific details (not abstract or general ones) E.g., "A *two-inch-wide* trim board runs along the edge of the roof, and its *lavender* color clashes with the *orange* of the rock walls."
- **COMPARISONS:** What does it look LIKE? E.g., “Near the southwest corner of the building, the lavender paint is peeling like a bad case of sunburn."
- **INFERENCES**:What specific details lead you to believe something. E.g., "The peeling paint gives the impression that the college has no money for repairs or that no one here cares about the appearance of the buildings."

4. EVAUATE AND REVISE—TRANSITIONS ETC.

- Identify your starting point.
- Link each detail by distance and direction from the location of the previous detail.
- **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**

EXPLORATION 2: ANOTHER BUILDING--WRITER'S CHOICE

TOPIC

Describe a building or house of your choice. Choose your building carefully. Make the building one that you think has character or personality. Later you may be asked to write more about this building, and your choice of a building will significantly affect how well you can do on that later assignment. Limit the description to what you can see of the building from one vantage point on the outside of the building. You may include details of the inside of the building if you can see them from your outside vantage point. You may also include details of the house’s yard or building’s grounds if necessary. Choose a time and place where you will be safe. An ideal situation would be working inside a friend’s or relative's house and describing a building or house across the street. Finally, if you choose a house, do not choose your own house or that of a friend, relative, or familiar neighbor because then you will be tempted to report what you already KNOW rather than what you INFER for this assignment.

EXPLORATION 2 CHECKLIST

1. **PLAN**
   - **DUE DATE IS _____.**
   - **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
   - **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the description to what you can see of the building from one vantage point on the outside of the building.

2. **ORGANIZE**
   - Begin with a general description of the size, shape, construction, and location of the building.
   - State the vantage point from which you are viewing the building.
   - Use a SPATIAL organization for the details.

3. **WRITE—INCLUDE**
   - **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Concrete, specific details (not abstract or general ones) E.g., "A *two-inch-wide* trim board runs along the edge of the roof, and its *lavender* color clashes with the *orange* of the rock walls."
   - **COMPARISONS:** What does it look LIKE? E.g., “Near the southwest corner of the building, the lavender paint is peeling like a bad case of sunburn."
   - **INFERENCES**:What specific details lead you to believe something. E.g., "The peeling paint gives the impression that the college has no money for repairs or that no one here cares about the appearance of the buildings."

4. **EVAUATE AND REVISE—TRANSITIONS ETC.**
   - Identify your starting point.
   - Link each detail by distance and direction from the location of the previous detail.
   - **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**

CHAPTER 19: EXPLORING IDEAS ABOUT PEOPLE

Figure 19-1

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THE GOAL OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- Focus observation on specific, frequently overlooked details of people's appearance and behavior
- Maintain objectivity and avoid personal feelings in describing a person

- Record observations in accurate, specific, and concrete vocabulary
- Use comparisons to enhance readers' understanding of your observations
- Provide multiple inferences about people based upon your observation of each detail
- Organize a description according to a time (chronological) pattern
- Provide a brief introduction to the topic and transitions to connect parts of a chronologically organized description

REASONS FOR THESE ASSIGNMENTS

The assigned topics for writing in this chapter are people--an individual in a picture, a live person, and a group of people. Your job is to describe the individual(s) as accurately as you can and to note as many reasonable inferences about the people as possible. Although we aren't often aware that we are making inferences about individuals, many academic disciplines require that we make inferences consciously and logically. Here are some examples of people in those disciplines:

- **Psychologists** studying specific human behavior frequently have to identify which behavior can be reasonably associated with particular interior states--e.g. mood or attitude toward specific situations.

- **Sociologists** studying group behavior define specific kinds of behavior that are related to other social phenomenon--e.g., how a certain level of common interests is related to a married couple's staying married.

- **Dramatic** and **literary critics** analyze particular elements of a character's behavior to determine what is going in within the character's thinking and feelings.

- **Historians** commonly try to identify the mindset of a historical figure through an examination of the person's behavior that is

documented in his or her own writing and in the writing of those who interacted with him or her.

The same skills that are useful in these academic fields are also indispensable in the workplace. People in many professions could not function without constant attention to the messages that they receive from people's behavior. Some examples of the professions are these:

- **Counselors**, **social workers**, and **probation officers** need to be aware of how word choice, tone of voice, and posture reveal the inner feelings that a client may be unaware of or unwilling to disclose.

- **Lawyers** need to notice how witnesses conduct themselves in order to determine whether they will provide reliable and effective evidence on the witness stand.

- **Doctors**, **nurses**, and other **healthcare professionals** need to be notice behavior that signals mental conditions that can effect a patient's treatment.

- **Human resource personnel** and **managers** must develop the skills of evaluating prospective employees from brief observations of their behavior in a job interview.

THE CHALLENGE OF OBSERVING PEOPLE

Writing about people is more challenging that writing about an object like a building. We find easier to remain objective about an object because most objects do not engage our feelings as quickly or as deeply as people do. Sometimes we take a strong and immediate like or dislike to a person. After that, we often have difficulty objectively interpreting anything we see or learn about the person. The next set of writing assignments challenge you to do maintain your objectivity and clearly record information about a people without letting your emotions distract you from the facts and clear thinking.

In our everyday lives we can let our emotions lead us to unjustified conclusion about people, so the skill of looking at the person who is really there can be a real benefit to us. Being able to see the real person frees us from the misconceptions that can be created by prejudice, fears, or unfounded hopes. In the end our lives are much simpler if we can deal with the real person rather than the faulty image that our emotions have created.

The same is also true in the occupations that we choose: it is easy for professionals to fall into a rut in their thinking about the people they work with. For example, a probation officer could begin to feel that she has seen everything and that she understands the limited thinking of probationers. However, if she begins to treat all probationers alike, she is not really seeing each individual as he is and the officer may begin to make mistakes in her conclusions about the individual probationer. The same problem can trouble many professionals who recommend or decide the futures of individuals--including judges, counselors, and teachers. People have similar situations even in professions that deal primarily with things rather than with people. For example, if an engineer takes a prejudiced view of people who require his services, he will not be able to serve them (or his career) well.

THINKING ABOUT IT: AVOIDING EMOTIONAL CLOUDS

If a person were to mention Adolph Hitler, Mother Teresa, or Albert Einstein, you would very likely be able to picture the person. In addition, most people's emotions would be aroused. Hitler could arouse feelings of anger, fear, or hatred. Mother Teresa could arouse feelings of admiration, respect, or reverence. And Einstein could arouse feelings of admiration, awe, or even intimidation. The feelings that we have for these people would make it difficult for us to accept contrary facts or opinions about them. Similarly, details that we notice about people can influence our feelings about them and prevent us from accurately observing other details or forming accurate opinions about them. For example, if a person dresses in a manner we feel inappropriate, we often have difficulty seeing positive traits in the person. These reactions are natural and in some cases useful. However, in professional and academic life the reactions are usually inappropriate and unproductive.

It has often been said that the first thing that college students need to learn is how little they really know. This idea applies particularly to their understanding of people. Students frequently come to college with limited experiences of other people and limited concepts about why they behave as they do. College experiences can shatter the unquestioned, often stereotypical thinking about people that students bring to college. Some college students find out how little they really know about people, how much their views of others were clouded by prejudice and emotion. Because of the need to expand students' thinking about people, college courses require that students break away from their simple view of people and apply new concepts to old situations. For example, a communications

class may require that you identify how your self-concept may sabotage your communications skills. A literature class may challenge you to evaluate the reasonableness of a character's actions in a situation that seems foreign to you. An anthropology class may require that you sympathetically analyze the role of relationships in other cultures even when those relationships violate some of the basic values that you have been taught.

In all of these situations--our personal lives, our professional lives, and our academic lives--we need to see others as they are, not as we wish or fear or assume that they are. The assignments in chapter challenge you to practice doing exactly that.

EXPLORING A PERSON OR A GROUP OF PEOPLE

The purpose of these assignments is to see a person clearly and objectively and to make reasonable judgments about people rather than basing judgments on prejudices or feelings. Because the three assignments have somewhat different topics--a person in a picture, a live person, and a group of people--each provides a slightly different challenge.

LIMIT THE TOPIC

Depending on the assignment, limit the topic to the assigned person or the person(s) you choose. Do not let your feelings distract you from the real person. Do not let your attention wander to other people or things that you notice, just because they interest you. In describing a person's appearance, notice her body, her expression, posture, and clothing. You may also include other people or things in her surroundings if they help you to describe or make inferences about the person you are describing.

Actions usually tell us more about a person than simple appearance. If you are describing a live person or persons, you should devote most of your space to describing their actions. Pay particular attention to any specific actions that help you to make inferences about unseen things, such as their feelings, mood, attitude, thoughts, past history, or future plans.

Whether you are describing a person in a picture or a live person, avoid making up stories about something you cannot see. For example, if you see that a person's eyes are drooping, you could make the inference that she was up late the night before. But don't just guess about what kept her up

the previous night. If, however, you have additional details--e.g., she appears to be frantically studying for a test--you might infer that she studied late the previous night.

CONTENT

Provide a detailed description of the person. Provide concrete details that enable a reader to see the person as you see her. Use comparisons whenever they will make your description more concise or vivid. Go beyond your assumptions about people. Make two or three different inferences about the details you observe. Include inferences about the person's feelings, ideas, past, and future.

> **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Concrete, specific details (not abstract or general ones). For example, "Her faded green shirt is fastened by black buttons, but the third one from the top seems to be missing."
>
> **COMPARISONS:** What does it look LIKE? For example, "The weave of her shirt is nearly as coarse as that of a burlap bag."
>
> **INFERENCES**:What specific details lead you to believe. For example, "The wrinkled green shirt, missing its third button, could lead one to infer that she does not care about her appearance or is planning some messy job."

USE SPATIAL, TIME (CHRONOLOGICAL), OR PROGRESSIVE ORGANIZATION.

Rough drafts can be written in any order that is easiest for the writer. For example, if you begin to describe a person's appearance first, you might be distracted from that job by something she is doing. Since you want to describe her actions while she is engaged in them, you jump from appearance to actions. When her actions no longer require immediate attention, you can go back to describing her appearance. But in organizing the final version of the paper, make sure to follow the assigned organization.

SPATIAL ORDER FOR APPEARANCE

For a description of a stationary person, like a person frozen in a photograph or a painting, a spatial organization usually works well. For example, you can begin with the top of the person--hat, hair, or face. Then

you can work your way down the person--neck, torso, arms, legs, and feet. This is the same method of organization used in describing a building. This same method of organization also works for describing a living, moving person, but it is harder to concentrate on keeping details in the right order because you can be distracted by what the person is doing.

TIME (CHRONOLOGICAL) FOR A PERSON'S ACTIONS

Describing a live person also adds another dimension to organization. Since a live person is often moving, talking, and changing expression, a simple spatial organization does not help us organize the things that she does. Generally a time (or chronological) order works well. Time order requires just that you list the things that the person does in the same order in which she does them. This is a method of organization that is comfortable for most people because it follows the same pattern that we all use when telling a story.

PROGRESSIVE ORDER (ORDER OF IMPORTANCE) FOR GROUPS

Describing a group of people is often a challenge because it is difficult to decide which person should be put first in the paper, which second, and so on. If the people show up at different times, chronological order, the order in which they show up, would work. But if they are all present at the same time we need to find another method of organization. The solution is often ***progressive order*** (or order of importance). This order is created by listing the items in a most-to-least order. The order is called *progressive* because the list progresses from the most to least _____. (You can fill in the blank with whatever descriptive word you want. Also, you could also use just the reverse order--from least _____ to most _____.) For example, people can be listed in order of height (tallest to least tall, or shortest), in order of formality of dress (most formal dress to least formal), or order of happiness (most happy to least happy). The characteristic that you choose for this method of organization should be one that makes sense in terms of the details you notice. For example, if what you noticed most about people you observed was the range of their moods, perhaps most-to-least happy should be the pattern of organization that you use. The second name for this method of organization is ***order of importance*** because we usually list items in the order of most important to least important for our main observation or idea. (When we talk about "least important for our main idea" we don't mean that it is unimportant, just that, of all the items important enough to be included in the paper, this last one is the least important.)

PROVIDE TRANSITIONS

BEGINNING THE PAPER

To give your readers a clear idea of what to expect in your description, begin with a brief description of the place and time of your observation. If you are describing a person in a picture, some details of the picture might help you to infer the time and place. If you are describing a live person or persons, identify the general kind of activity you observed.

SPATIAL TRANSITIONS FOR DESCRIBING A PERSON

Transitions in a spatial organization are quite similar to those used in describing a building. If your person has a scar on her arm three inches below her left elbow, the phrase "three inches below her left elbow" will identify the location. In many cases, however, all we need to mention is the part of the body that we are describing. Since eyes and eyebrows have a fairly uniform relationship to each other, we do not normally have to give directions to enable a reader to relate eyes and eyebrows.

TIME (CHRONOLOGICAL) TRANSITIONS FOR DESCRIBING ACTIONS

Describing a person's actions brings up a new kind of transition--the time (or chronological) transition. Since all a person's actions are organized in time, we need to tell our readers how our details of a person's actions are related to other actions. For example, you could say, "She sits on the couch and stares out the window. After staring for about fifteen seconds, she picks up the paper and quickly pages through the first section." The phrase "for about fifteen seconds" gives your readers the time link between her actions. Avoid *then* and *and then* sentence beginnings. As soon as readers recognize that we have organized the details in a time order, they will assume the connection that these terms indicate.

PROGRESSIVE TRANSITIONS FOR DESCRIBING A GROUP

When using a progressive order, you need to make each sentence clearly refer either to the same person as the last sentence or to a different person. When we want to refer to the same person, a pronoun is the easiest way. For example, if you introduce a woman studying at a library table in one sentence and want to provide more details in a second sentence, all you

have to do is say, "*She* sits unmoving for about three minutes." The *she* tells readers that this is the same person as in the preceding sentence. If you wish to switch to a different woman, you can introduce her by saying, "The woman at the end of the table is writing almost at conscientiously as the first woman. . . ." This sentence does two things for a reader: it clearly distinguishes the two women, and it signals that they are arranged in a progressive order--here in order of how conscientiously they are working. We can also distinguish two persons by their clothing, size, age, or some other visible feature.

Figure 19-2

EXPLORATION 3: DESCRIPTION OF A PERSON IN A PICTURE

TOPIC

Limit the topic to the assigned person in the picture. Describe her as completely as you can. Include all parts of her body, her expression, stance, and clothing. You may also include a description of any other person in the picture if that description will enable you to make inferences about the person you are describing. You may also include a description of the objects in the picture in as much as they enable you to make inferences about the person you are describing.

EXPLORATION 3 CHECKLIST

1. **PLAN**
   - **DUE DATE IS _____**
   - **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
   - **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the description to what you can actually see of the person in the picture. Describe other persons or objects in the picture if they enable you to make inferences about the person.

2. **ORGANIZE:**
   - Begin with a general description of the picture: the person(s) who are pictured and what they appear to be doing, what important objects are in the picture and the relationship of the objects to the person(s).
   - Describe the assigned person first, then, if necessary, other persons and objects in the picture.
   - Use a SPATIAL organization, from top to bottom, for the details of the person.
   - Other persons can be described in the same order.
   - Important objects in the picture can be described in a spatial order like the one that used for describing buildings.

3. **WRITE—INCLUDE**
   - **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Concrete, specific details (not abstract or general ones). For example, "Her faded green shirt is fastened by black buttons, but the third one from the top seems to be missing."
   - **COMPARISONS:** What does it look LIKE? For example, "The weave of her shirt is as coarse as that of a burlap bag."
   - **INFERENCES**:What specific details lead you to believe something. For example, "The wrinkled green shirt, missing its third button, could lead one to infer that she does not care about her appearance or is planning some messy job."

4. **EVALUATE AND REVISE—TRANSITIONS ETC.**
   - Identify your starting point.
   - Wherever necessary, link each detail by distance and direction from the location of the previous detail.
   - When you move from one person to another or from one object to another, make it clear that you are changing topics.
   - **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**

EXPLORATION 4: DESCRIPTION OF A LIVE PERSON

TOPIC

Describe a live person that you can observe UNINTERRUPTED for 45 to 60 minutes. Choose a time and place where you will be safe. Observing a complete stranger may not be safe. Because a future paper may be written about this same person, choose a person who has some interest for you. If you are bored by the person you describe, she will not inspire you to write engagingly about her in later, more structured assignments. Also, in order to concentrate fully on this assignment, choose a time and place where other responsibilities will not distract you from your observation. (See note after the last example of good choices of subjects.) Because you want to be able to make inferences about a real person, avoid choosing a person who is concentrating on acting one very specific way--for example, a performer or a participant in organized sports.

Here are some examples of **good** choices of subjects:

- A friend or family member who will not mind your watching and recording everything she does
- A young child at play--for example, in your yard or a neighbor's
- Somebody watching television or playing a electronic game
- An employee working at your college--for example, a librarian, cafeteria worker, or maintenance worker
- An instructor at your college [Ask an instructor if you can observe her in a class in which you are NOT enrolled. If it is a class in which you are enrolled, you cannot do a good job of learning and completing this assignment at the same time.]

Here are some examples of **poor** choices:

- A stranger
- A friend or family member who will distract you from your assignment--for example, a friend whom you are entertaining in your home
- A friend or family member who will be upset if you describe her accurately
- A child who is very dependent on you and will constantly interrupt your work
- Somebody performing on television or for an audience--for example, entertainers or athletes

- Somebody with whom you have recently fallen in love [That makes being objective very difficult.]

Limit the description to the one person you observe. Use about 200 words to describe her appearance. For the rest of the paper, describe the specific things that she does and says. You may also include specific details of the setting and of other persons--but only to help explain the person you have chosen. Describe each individual thing that she does (what she is doing right this moment); DO NOT GENERALIZE ABOUT HER ACTIONS. For example, do not say, "She would constantly dab her French fries in the ketchup." Instead, say "She picks up a French fry and slowly dabs in a pool of ketchup four times before she seems satisfied that it is adequately coated." Then later you can mention that she repeats the action.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC STATEMENT EXERCISE

Identify the most specific and the most general statement in each group. Put a ***G*** next to the most general statement in each group and ***S*** next to the most specific statement.

Set 1

1. Alla was always scratching her head. _____
2. Alla scratched her head several times while she read her anthropology textbook. _____
3. Alla scratched her head as she turned the first page of her anthropology textbook. _____

Set 2

1. Tanya rushed around the kitchen. _____
2. Tanya rushed from the refrigerator back to the stove. _____
3. Tanya rushed back and forth between the stove and the refrigerator. _____

Set 3

1. After the baseball game, Theron turned the channel to the Lakers' game. _____
2. Theron watched the Lakers play the Timberwolves. _____
3. All night long Theron watched sports on TV. _____

Set 4

1. On the couch, the baby bit the cushion. _____
2. On the couch, the baby was biting the cushion. _____
3. On the couch, the baby was frequently biting the cushion. _____

Set 5

1. Jose drank a can of pop before lunch. _____

2. Jose would constantly take small sips from a can of pop. _____
3. Jose took another sip of pop after he sat down in the shade of the tree. _____

Set 6

1. Alina worked quickly on cooking dinner for her guests. _____
2. Alina diced the two green peppers faster than a food processor. _____
3. Alina prepared vegetables for her guests' dinner. _____

Set 7

1. After settling in her chair, Tien checked her list of homework assignments. _____
2. While sitting in her chair, Tien kept checking her list of homework assignments. _____
3. While sitting in her chair, Tien checked her list of homework assignments more than once. _____

Set 8

1. As the ball came closer, Willy walked toward it. _____
2. Every time the ball came closer, Willy walked toward it. _____
3. As the ball came closer, Willy took a step toward it. _____

Set 9

1. Early in the evening, Darien rested in easy chair. _____
2. Early in the evening, Darien was fighting a losing battle against sleep. _____
3. Early in the evening, Darien's head dropped to his chest as he fell asleep. _____

Set 10

1. Farah looked at the clock while he was working on his homework. _____
2. Farah looked at the clock as he opened his chemistry book. _____
3. Farah continually looked at the clock as he worked on his homework. _____

Set 11

1. In the yard Lillie took care of her rose bushes. _____
2. In the yard Lillie cut a thin, dead branch from a rose bush. _____
3. In the yard Lillie pruned a rose bush. _____

Set 12

1. Kumyea quickly wrote out the calculations for her last math problem. _____
2. Kumyea worked through her last few math problems before dinnertime. _____
3. Kumyea worked through her math homework before dinnertime. _____

In describing a person's actions, also try to emphasize HOW she does things rather than the fact that she does them. For example, don't say, "She looks at the bench before she sits down." You could say, "As she looks at the bench, she focuses her eyes and furrows her brow as though she is afraid that the seat may have been contaminated by a dread disease."

Lastly, when you are taking notes for this assignment or when you are working on your the final version of the paper, you may find that you have too much material for the assigned paper. In that case, you may want to limit the topic to just one aspect of the person's behavior--e.g., how she eats, talks, moves, or reacts to one specific thing (TV or music, for example).

EXPLORATION 4 CHECKLIST

1. **PLAN**
   - **DUE DATE IS _____.**
   - **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
   - **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the description to the one person you observe.
     - Devote no more than one third of description to her appearance.
     - For the rest of the paper, describe the ***specific things*** that she does and says (avoid generalizing).

2. **ORGANIZE:** The rough draft may follow any convenient order. The final version should follow the following pattern:
   - Begin with a brief description of the time and place of your observation and identify the person you observed (in some way--name, age and sex, or outstanding physical feature) and her general kind of activity.
   - Use a SPATIAL organization, from top to bottom, for the details of the person's appearance.
   - Use a time (CHRONOLOGICAL) order for the details of her actions.

3. **WRITE—INLCUDE**
   - **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Concrete, specific details (not abstract or general ones). For example, "Her faded green shirt is fastened by black buttons, but the third one from the top seems to be missing."
   - **COMPARISONS:** What does it look LIKE? For example, "The weave of her shirt is as coarse as that of a burlap bag."
   - **INFERENCES**:What specific details lead you to believe something. For example, "The wrinkled green shirt, missing its third button, could lead one to infer that she does not care about her appearance or is planning some messy job."

4. EVALUATE AND REVISE—TRANSITIONS ETC.

- Identify the starting point of the description of the person's appearance.
- Wherever necessary in the description of the person's appearance, link each detail by distance and direction from the location of the previous detail.
- Provide clear time indicators to connect details of the person's actions.
- **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**

EXPLORATION 5: DESCRIPTION OF A GROUP OF PEOPLE

Figure 19-3

TOPIC

Describe individuals in a group of people that you can observe UNINTERRUPTED for 45 to 60 minutes. The people you describe do not have to be in the same location all at the same time, nor do they need to consider themselves a group. For example, several students checking out books from the library over an hour period would qualify as a group. Choose a time and place where you will be safe. Because a future paper may be written about these people, choose people who have some interest for you. If you are bored by the people you describe, they will not inspire you to write engagingly about them in later, more structured assignments. Also, in order to concentrate fully on this assignment, choose a time and place where other responsibilities will not distract you from your observation. Because you want to be able to make inferences about these people, avoid choosing people who are concentrating on acting one very specific way--for example, performers or participants in organized sports.

Here are some examples of **good** choices of subjects:

- Students studying (or not) in the library or other campus study location
- Children playing
- A group watching television

- Spectators at a sporting event, particularly parents at their children's game
- Shoppers entering or leaving a store or walking through a mall

Here are some examples of **poor** choices:

- Strangers in some location where they may be a threat to you
- Guests in your home, whom you should be entertaining instead of doing your assignment
- People performing on television or for an audience--for example, entertainers or athletes

Limit the description to a group of people who are doing the same thing--for example, walking out of a grocery store, watching a soccer game, or doing assignments in a computer lab. Include at least **six** individuals. You should give a few concrete details of each person's appearance--for example, sex, age, size, clothing (style, color, condition), or facial feature or expression. Limit this description to just a sentence or two. You should also include concrete details of each person's behavior. Avoid applying the same description to different persons. DO NOT GENERALIZE ABOUT THE GROUP; DESCRIBE INDIVIDUALS ONLY. Do not say that a family walks by eating ice cream cones. Instead, describe how each one is eating his or her ice cream cone. Even if you cannot describe each one of them as they go by, you will have details that are more concrete than if you had tried to describe them as a group.

Emphasize HOW each individual does things rather than the fact that she does them. For example, don't say, "She looks at the bench before she sits down." You could say, "As she looks at the bench, she focuses her eyes and furrows her brow as though she is afraid that the seat may have been contaminated by a dread disease."

Lastly, when you are taking notes for this assignment or when you are working on the final version of the paper, you may find that you have too much material for the assigned paper. In that case, you may want to limit the topic to just one aspect of the people's behavior--e.g., how they eat, talk, move, or react to one specific thing (TV or music, for example).

EXPLORATION 5 CHECKLIST

1. **PLAN**
   - **DUE DATE IS _____.**
   - **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
   - **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the description to the individuals in the group you observe. Include a brief description of the time, place,

and general activity of the people and of each person's appearance. Be sure that you provide enough concrete details of each person's actions.

2. **ORGANIZE:** The rough draft may follow any convenient order. The final version should follow the following pattern:
   - Begin with a brief description of the time and place of your observation and general kind of activity of the people you observed.
   - Use a CHRONOLOGICAL or PROGRESSIVE ORDER to organize the people you observed.
     - Chronological order works well if the people appear at different times.
     - Progressive order works well if the people are all present at the same time. Put them in order of most _____ to least _____. (Fill the blanks with the same expression.)
   - For each person give a description of her appearance first and her actions second.
     - Spatial order works well for describing each person's appearance.
     - Chronological order works well for describing each person's actions.

3. **WRITE—INCLUDE**
   - **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Concrete, specific details (not abstract or general ones). For example, "Her faded green shirt is fastened by black buttons, but the third one from the top seems to be missing."
   - **COMPARISONS:** What does it look LIKE? For example, "The weave of her shirt is as coarse as that of a burlap bag."
   - **INFERENCES**:What specific details lead you to believe something. For example, "The wrinkled green shirt, missing its third button, could lead one to infer that she does not care about her appearance or is planning some messy job."

4. **EVALUATE AND REVISE—TRANSITIONS ETC.**
   - Identify each person when you first mention her in order to clearly distinguish each person from preceding ones.
   - When a sentence continues a description of the person in the preceding sentence, use a pronoun to refer to that person so that a reader knows that you haven't changed the topic to another person.
   - Provide clear time indicators to connect details of the person's actions.
   - **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**

CHAPTER 20: EXPLORING IDEAS ABOUT EXPERIENCES AND CONNECTING IDEAS FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THE GOAL OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- Understand how people's experiences affect their lives
- Read a written account actively and adjust for differences of time and culture
- Summarize details of a reading selection
- Make connections between reading and your own experience
- Record recollections in accurate, specific, and concrete vocabulary
- Organize a description according to a chronological, spatial, and progressive patterns
- Provide a brief introduction to your topic and transitions to connect parts of a paper

REASONS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

As in the previous assignments, we are sometimes required to write about topics from our own observations and experiences. However, instructors and employers usually expect us to integrate our observations, experiences with information from a variety of sources. The reason for the integration of different sources is that one source of information may be untrustworthy. When two or more sources support the same idea, the idea merits more

trust. In order to identify an idea that two sources support, this assignment focus on making a connection between our reading and our own observations and experiences. Specifically, we will focus on understanding stories about other people and on connecting their situations with our own experiences.

This assignment will also help to develop an important critical thinking skill, connecting supporting evidence from different sources. Many college assignments require that we apply critical thinking skills to the detailed information that we have recently learned or to information remembered from previous experiences. One of the most common examples of this situation is a research paper assignment. When an instructor assigns a research paper, she expects a reasonably fresh look at a particular situation. If, during our research, we see connections between the details we have read, we are much more able to create a fresh look at situation about which we are writing. Recognizing that connection can enable us to draft a main idea that will be the basis of an impressive research paper.

THINKING ABOUT IT: SEEING CONNECTIONS

Simply remembering details is not the most obvious criterion for professional and academic success. Critical thinking usually ranks much higher with both employers and college instructors. However, much of our critical thinking ability is dependent on having ready information—for which we depend on our memory. The importance of memory is illustrated by novelist E. M. Forster's comment about readers of novels: "The intelligent novel-reader, unlike the inquisitive one who just runs his eye over a new fact, mentally picks it up. He sees it from two points of view: isolated, and related to the other facts that he has read on previous pages." Although his comment is about reading novels, it is just as applicable to observing real life. Intelligent people notice an individual detail and its implications, but they also compare each detail with other information that they have previously gathered. Sometimes the connection between one detail and others comes to us immediately. At other times the challenge is to get access to memories of previous experiences. The following assignments provide some of that practice.

To help make connections between different sources this assignment has three separate parts:

- Summarize the story of another person’s experience
- State a general issue or idea that the story illustrates
- Tell a story of your own experience that illustrates the same idea

SUMMARIZING A STORY

READ ACTIVELY AND TAKE NOTES.

The first step is to read the material you want to compare with your experience. While reading, you need to make written record of everything that seems important. If the reading is in a book, magazine, or newspaper that you own, you may want to mark key words and passages and write comments in the margins. If not, write your notes and comments on a separate page, but make sure to make your comments complete enough to enable you to use them when you include the ideas in future writing. In addition, clearly distinguish the exact words of the author by putting those words inside quotation marks and make your own phrasing different from that of the author.

Key words, phrases, and names of persons are important to note. If you are marking your own book or other material, you should underline key words or phrases that you think may be important later. In stories you should circle the names (or other designations—e.g., “the dentist”) for any persons who could be important later. In taking notes on a separate page, you will need to make your notes more complete so that you can interpret them without the original source. In that case complete sentences are usually necessary.

All sorts of comments about your reading may be useful in future writing assignments. So don't read passively; read as though you had the writer in front of you and you need to challenge the writer and tell him or her what you think about the story. Here some sample comments that could be productive in looking for connections between details, particularly between causes and effects:

- Why does she think she has the right to do that?
- She seems to hate her neighbor. Is that (or she) normal?
- That sounds like my Uncle Bob. What makes people like that act that way?
- He got just what he was asking for. It seems so right!
- She seems to think that she can always rely on her family to watch out for her.
- He's as angry at his father as I was when my father told me he didn't like my career plans.
- She really seems determined to succeed. I wish I had that kind of drive!

ADJUST FOR DIFFERENCES OF TIME OR CULTURE.

Sometimes we need to base our ideas on a story from another time or another culture. In these cases we may have difficulty making comments about the stories because the situations seem so different from ours. However, we can often find important details to comment on if focus on some of universal relationships:

- relationships between friends
- relationships between enemies
- relationships between family members
- relationships between those in subordinate and superior positions
- relationships between a person and society as a whole
- relationships between a person and nature
- relationships between a person and his or her God

Although these relationships are universal ones, they are not experienced the same way in all cultures. The nature or the feelings involved in the relationships may be very similar, but a story from another culture may express or portray them quite differently from the way we do. In those cases a series of questions can help you to understand the relationship in another culture. Take, for instance, a story in which a young woman unaccountably makes a cutting comment to her friend. In this case you should ask yourself questions like these:

- What words in her comment makes me think of it as a cutting comment?
- What feeling makes her talk in that manner?
- What has happened to make her feel that way?
- Did her friend do something to cause her to feel that way?
- Would her statement to her friend be justified by my culture?
- Are the standards of justification in her time and culture the same as in mine?
- If the standards are different, what are they?
- If I were in the same situation (at that time and place), would I feel or act the same?
- If I wouldn't feel or act that way, what kind of person would?

You might notice that many of these questions concern causes and effects, topics that are often good topics for exploration.

WRITING THE SUMMARY

The following explanation provides the methods for both stories (e.g., fiction and biography) and for expository writing, the kind of writing that focuses mainly on explicit ideas and supporting details. [The explanation for the latter kind of writing is in the brackets.]

1. In the first sentence identify the piece by name and by the name of the author (and where it is published if it does not appear alone) and the piece's main idea or topic (if an idea is not clear from the piece).
2. For a story identify the major character(s) and event(s). [For expository writing, identify the main method(s) of reasoning, particularly the method(s) of supporting the main idea.]
3. For a story include other important events and characters. [For expository writing, include main supporting ideas and concepts.]
4. Summarize in your own words. Do not use the wording or sentence structure of the original, except as noted in 5 below.
5. If you think it is essential to use the words of the original piece for a specific idea, enclose those words in quotation marks. Limit your use of the exact words of the original to the most important phrases.
6. Compress: Eliminate ideas that are not essential. For ideas that are important enough to be included, reduce sentences to subordinate clauses or to an additional subject or predicate in another sentence. Reduce clauses to phrases, and phrases to words wherever possible. *For this assignment, you will want to provide more details of the sections of the story that illustrate the idea that you find in the story. You can better make this choice of details after you have chosen the general issue or idea that makes up the second part of this assignment.*
7. Check that the summary does not misstate the ideas or implications of the piece.
8. Add transitional words where necessary to show connections between ideas.

STATING A GENERAL ISSUE OR IDEA: OR SO WHAT?

MONITOR YOUR RESPONSES FOR KEYS TO SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES.

After you have a list of comments keyed to the text of the story, you need to identify what they signify. To find comments that are most likely candidates for this assignment, look for those that reveal a similarity or a difference between your experience and that of the writer. Comments like "I've been

there," "That sounds like Uncle Henry," and "Isn't that the way!" are signals that the story bears a similarity to something that you experienced or is at least a part of your memories. Comments like "I wish that I had been so lucky," "I'm glad that isn't me," and "How could that have happened?" show that the events of the story contrast with your own experiences. If there are several such comments, you can identify the best candidates for paragraph material by noting those comments that provide the strongest similarity to or contrast with your own experiences.

ASSESS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A SIMILARITY OR DIFFERENCE OR ANSWERING THE QUESTION, “SO WHAT?”

To identify what the comments signify, write down the details from the story and those from your experience that show the sharpest similarity or sharpest contrast. Here you are looking for a way to express the similarity or difference between sets of details about people in different situations. For example, you might notice that in both situations harsh words are exchanged between a parent and child, even though the parent is trying to be helpful to the child. You might become aware of one reason that children sometimes resent a parent's attempt to help. At this point you are on the road to finding a good idea or issue for this paper.

TELLING OUR OWN STORY

When you tell your own story, you will naturally have to give some background about the situation in which your story takes place. Some elements the may need to be included are the year or your age at which your experience took place, the location or culture in which it took place, the family or social situation that affects the understanding of the story. Writing out as much as you can remember about these elements of background can mentally put you into the setting of your story and will help you to remember the details that made the story stick with you. (After you have completed a draft of the whole paper, you can then decide which of these elements will help a reader understand the experience and which can be eliminated.)

Recalling specific details about our experiences can be challenging. When we recall an experience, we usually remember our emotions and ideas we formed at the time. What we often forget are the details that led us to the feelings or ideas. To uncover those details, we need to ask ourselves questions like these: "Why did I feel that way?" (What details caused the feeling? What physical sensations told me that I had such emotions?) "Why did I think he was disappointed with my performance?" (What about his appearance or actions indicated that he was disappointed?) We may be

able to answer these questions with details like these: "I knew I was embarrassed by what I had done because I felt my face get hot. Then I couldn't look at my dad; all I could look at was my shoes. I knew he was disappointed with me because his lips got thin, he cocked his head as if to ask, 'What has happened to you?' and he didn't lecture me the way he did when I had made one of my normal childhood mistakes."

CONTENT OF YOUR STORY

Provide a detailed description of your experiences. You want to enable the reader to experience the events of your story just as you did. To accomplish this goal, you will need to move beyond your feelings and impressions about the experiences. Sometimes it is even more effective if we do not mention the feelings and concentrate only on the details that display those feelings.

CONCRETE DETAILS: Concrete, specific details (not abstract or general ones). For example, "His eyes did not make contact with mine, and he walked slowly in an aimless pattern."

COMPARISONS: What does it look LIKE? For example, "He turned back and forth like a leaf oscillating in a gentle breeze."

INFERENCES:What specific details lead you to remember particular impressions? In this paper you might be tempted to report the memorable emotions of others. But you need to be sure to include some of the details that signaled the emotions. For example, "He must have been disappointed because he would not look directly at me or respond to my questions about my performance."

USE AN APPROPRIATE METHOD OF ORGANIZATION.

TIME (CHRONOLOGICAL) ORDER FOR TELLING A STORY

Since most experiences are remembered as stories, chronological order will probably work the best for recounting most of your experience. Just put the events in the same order in which they happened. But at some points you might have to mention events that happened at another time. For example, you might be describing how you broke your mother's vase, which had been given to her by her mother fifty years ago. If the gift of the vase is the only event from fifty years ago, it is quite appropriate to mention that fact when you are describing your breaking it.

SPATIAL ORDER FOR DESCRIBING APPEARANCE

Any time you want to describe an object—a bike, car, house, or anything that plays an important role in your experience—a spatial order will usually work well. This is the same order used for describing buildings in Chapter 18.

PROGRESSIVE ORDER (ORDER OF IMPORTANCE) FOR A SERIES OF ITEMS

When you describe three or more items, persons, or situations that cannot easily be put into chronological or spatial order, progressive order will often be a good choice. Progressive order puts things in a pattern from most _____ to least _____. You can fill in the blanks with any descriptive word that makes sense in talking about your experience. You can also use just the reverse order—from least _____ to most _____. For example, if you want to describe your relatives' responses to your misfortune, you could put them in order of most sympathetic to least sympathetic (or just the reverse).

PROVIDE TRANSITIONS.

To give your readers a clear idea of what to expect in each part of your paper, begin with a sentence or two that identifies the content of each section. Also, when you make major change in topic—for example, from the summary of the story to the issue it raises—explain the connection between the two. For example, you could use a sentence like this: "Gary Soto's feeling about his clothes is one that many teens have in that . . . [here you provide the idea that you see in Soto's story]."

SIGNALING TIME CHANGES

In describing the events, you need to provide appropriate signals to the timing of events. Avoid the unnecessary *and then* connectors. A reader of a story will normally assume the simple chronological order that *then* signals. But any point at which there is a gap in time or at which different events overlap, you need to indicate that fact with transitions like, "after ten minutes" or "while we were working at that job, my cousin started . . . ."

SIGNALING SPATIAL CHANGES

Transitions in a spatial organization are quite similar to those used in describing a building. If you are describing something that is quite standard in construction—for example a bike or a car—you may not need to

tell where each part is in relationship to each other. You don't for example need to tell where a bike's handlebars are in relationship to the front wheel. But less standardized things, like a house, may require such transitions.

SIGNALING CONTINUATION AND PROGRESSIVE CHANGES

When using a progressive order, you need to make each sentence clearly refer either to the same item as the last one or to a different item. If, for example, you are talking about an aunt's sympathetic response to our situation, you need only refer to "she" or "her." However, when you refer to another aunt, you need to provide a transition like "Aunt Felicia wasn't as sympathetic as Aunt Emma." This kind of transition signals that you have moved on to another member of the family and that the relatives are arranged in order of their sympathies for us.

EXPLORATION 6 CHECKLIST

5. PLAN

- **DUE DATE IS _____**
- **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
- **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the topic to the following points:
  - A statement of one significant issue or idea that the story brings to mind (in 100-200 words). This statement could be a lesson that the story illustrated for the writer or for you. It could also be just a challenge that people face in life. The issue or idea does not have to summarize the whole story. It could be about only one small portion of the story. But explain in enough detail that readers can appreciate the concept.
  - A summary of the story in one of the assigned readings (in 200-300 words)
  - A story from your own experience that in some way deals with the same issue or idea (in 200 words or more). Make sure you include enough concrete details so that a reader can visualize how the issue or idea occurred in your life.

6. ORGANIZE

You may find it easier to start your rough draft with the summary of the story you have read. Then you can write about either the main idea (So what?) or about your own story. Finally, you should draft the remaining part. Although you can write a rough draft in any order, use the following order for the final draft.

- First, state a general issue or idea that you found in the story and connect it with the details of the story and your own experience.

- Second, identify the story and the author that are the basis of the assignment and summarize the story, with emphasis on details that illustrate a general issue or idea.
- Third, tell a story about your own experience which illustrates the same idea.
- Use an appropriate method of organizing each section:
  - CHRONOLOGICAL order for events of both stories (the author's and yours),
  - SPATIAL order for describing things,
  - PROGRESSIVE order for describing a series of things for which chronological and spatial order do not work (particularly in stating the issue or idea).

7. WRITE—INCLUDE

- **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Concrete, specific details (not abstract or general ones). For example, "His eyes did not make contact with mine, and he walked slowly in an aimless pattern."
- **COMPARISONS:** What does it look LIKE? For example, "He turned back and forth like a leaf oscillating in a gentle breeze."
- **INFERENCES**:What specific details lead you to remember particular impressions? For example, "He must have been disappointed because he would not look directly at me or respond to my questions about my performance."

8. EVALUATE AND REVISE—TRANSITIONS ETC.

- The topic is limited.
- The organization follows an appropriate order.
- The paper contains adequate details, comparisons, and inferences.
- **TRANSITIONS**
  - Signal clearly when you move from one section of the paper to the next.
  - Locate your own story's events in time by mentioning the year, the time of year, or your age at the time.
  - Wherever necessary, connect each detail with the preceding one in time, space, or progression.
- **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**

CHAPTER 21: SUPPORTING AN IDEA BOUT AN OBJECT—DRAWING AND SUPPORTING CONCLUSIONS—SPATIAL ORDER

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THE GOAL OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- Understand that a topic sentence, organization, and transitional devices are important to effectively present your reasoned opinion
- Develop a method of analyzing details, inferences, and comparisons that will enable you to draw a reasoned opinion
- Distinguish between reasoned opinions, matters of fact, and matters of personal taste
- Compose one reasoned opinion in a clear and limited topic sentence
- Support a topic sentence with concrete details, comparisons and inferences
- Organize a paragraph in a spatial pattern
- Connect ideas with a paragraph with transitional devices, particularly spatial terms

REASONS FOR PARAGRAPH ASSIGNMENTS

The purpose of these assignments is to develop the skill of drawing broader inferences than those in earlier papers and supporting each inference with relevant concrete details. In these assignments we will report a conclusion

(a reasoned opinion) near the beginning of a paragraph in what is called a topic sentence. The rest of each paragraph will then report the relevant concrete details that support our opinion. A reader of any college paper or business report will expect not only that we explain our thinking but also that we logically defend our thought. As an employee you may have a serious responsibility--for example, recommending disciplinary action for another employee or recommending that your company acquire a new facility or produce a new line of products. In cases like these, your employer expects that you analyze all the relevant details and support your recommendation with significant supporting detail. Unless you can line up convincing details to support your recommendation, the employer will have some reason to doubt your recommendation and your usefulness to the company. Most writing assignments in college are designed to require the same kind of effort in order to develop those thinking skills required for success in both business and in life.
The ability to draw reasoned opinions about objects and to support those opinions with factual details is important for people in the same academic and professional fields mentioned in earlier Chapter 18:

- Anthropologists
- Artists
- Literary critics
- Environmental scientists
- Geologists
- Healthcare professionals
- Buyers
- Real estate appraisers

PARAGRAPH CONSTRUCTION

Paragraphs are a writer's middle-sized unit of thought. The smaller unit is the sentence, which is defined by a subject and an assertion about that subject. The larger unit is the report, essay, or theme--all of which name a large piece of writing that contains several paragraphs and has a clearly defined purpose--including a subject and a specific idea about that subject. Paragraphing is a technique of organizing several sentences into a block of writing that has a specific, clear job function in development of the main idea of the report or essay. Without reference to the larger and smaller units of writing, the paragraph doesn't have a great deal of meaning. Despite that fact, this book contains several assignments for isolated paragraphs. Why? One reason is that these assignments will provide practice with the smaller units of writing before you tackle the larger, more complicated ones. Throughout these assignments you could consider each paragraph as just one paragraph in a series of paragraphs, all of which

function together to support the main idea of a longer report. A second reason for paragraph assignments is that some short writing jobs--for example, short essays on tests--require just one paragraph.

THINKING ABOUT IT: PARAGRAPHS AND INFERENCES

One way to think about the paragraph is to compare it with some of the inferences that you have formulated in earlier papers. In those papers you have pointed out several possible conclusions that a specific detail could suggest. Writing paragraphs requires that we evaluate the possible conclusions and settle on one that makes the most sense. Then in constructing the paragraph we connect one conclusion with several details (in contrast with connecting one detail with several conclusions as we did in earlier papers). These two processes--connecting one detail with several conclusions and connecting one conclusion with several details--may seem contradictory, but they are not. The first one--imagining possible conclusions--is the creative, exploratory part of the writing process. The second one--supporting one conclusion--is the reasoning, evaluative part of the process. Both parts are necessary to write well; we cannot do the second part well unless we have done the first part.

Because the job of the paragraph is to support one major inference, all the sentences of the paragraph need to contribute to accomplishing that job. Each of the sentences of a paragraph should have some details that support the paragraph's main idea. Thus we can identify three characteristics of paragraph that demonstrates clear thinking:

- The sentences talk about the same subject (in contrast with the subjects covered in other paragraphs of a report).
- All of the sentences support one idea about the subject.
- No sentence can be eliminated without weakening the support for the paragraph's main idea.

THE TOPIC SENTENCE DEFINES THE PARAGRAPH.

Although all of these characteristics of paragraphs are important, the one that is probably the most challenging is the second one--making sure that the sentences of a paragraph support one idea about the subject. The key to making sure that the sentences support one idea is to make sure that every paragraph has a topic sentence. The ***topic sentence*** is simply the sentence that sums up the point of the whole paragraph. (If you are familiar with the term *thesis sentence*, you can think of the topic sentence as playing the same role in a paragraph as the thesis sentence plays in an

essay.) Although the term *topic sentence* implies that its main job is to name the topic, its job involves much more. In addition to mentioning the topic, the topic sentence must link the topic to the paragraph's key concept--the general inference or reasoned opinion that we are presenting about the topic. When we have a well-phrased topic sentence, we can use it as a test to evaluate the other sentences of the paragraph. When we look at each sentence of the paragraph, we should be able to see how it supports the idea of the topic sentence. If we cannot see the connection (or, more importantly, if a reader cannot see the connection), the sentence needs one of two remedies. It needs to be removed from the paragraph (and, perhaps, be placed in another paragraph where it would be more relevant). Or it needs an explanation of its connection to the topic sentence.

PLACEMENT OF THE TOPIC SENTENCE

Writers are often told that a topic sentence can be place in many different locations in a paragraph or can even be left entirely out of the paragraph as long as the main idea of the paragraph is clear. Though these pieces of advice are correct, you may notice in your reading that you can most easily read those pieces in which the author regularly places topic sentences near the beginnings of paragraphs. Because ease in reading is critical for our readers' understanding and appreciation of our idea, it is probably best to get into the habit of putting topic sentence near the beginning of paragraphs. On rereading our writing, we can then decide whether the placement is best or whether the paragraph would be just as effective if we omitted the topic sentence.

Although the topic sentence should normally be close to the beginning of the paragraph, it does not always have to be the first sentence. In most good expository writing, like the writing in most textbooks, the topic sentence is most frequently the first sentence of a paragraph. But it can almost as often be the second or third sentence of the paragraph. This placement is often required because the topic of the paragraph needs a sentence of introduction or a connection to the topic of the preceding paragraph. Thus writers sometimes use introducing or connecting sentence to focus our attention on the topic sentence and to make its relevance more evident. One way to verify the importance of putting the topic sentence near the paragraph's beginning is to look at one of your textbooks. Texts for subjects like history or psychology make the best examples because they usually have longer paragraphs than some others, like math. If you are underlining or highlighting important sentences in the text, looking at the book should reveal a pattern. A sentence near the beginning of most paragraphs should be marked because it is the main idea of the paragraph, the topic sentence. This is not to say that other sentences are not important

enough to mark, but the topic sentences are almost always important enough to mark.

GUIDELINES FOR PARAGRAPH ASSIGNMENTS

Unless your instructor gives your different directions, each paragraph assignment should follow the following standards.

LENGTH

100-200 words--about 7 to 15 sentences

FORMAT

- Double space (skip every other line)
- Use a standard, black 12-point font
- Leave 1-inch margins on sides, top, and bottom

ROUGH AND FINAL DRAFTS:

Hand in at least one rough draft and a clean final copy. “Clean” means as free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors as you know how to make it.

SPECIAL ITEMS TO PROOFREAD FOR

On each paper your instructor may assign specific elements of grammar, punctuation, or spelling to proofread for. These are items which you have been covered in class and which you are now responsible for applying to your papers.

CONCLUSION 1: A PARAGRAPH ABOUT A BUILDING

REASONS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

This assignment requires writing a paragraph that supports one idea about a building--either the one you described in Exploration 2 or another building you can describe. Although most jobs do not require writing about buildings, buildings are a relatively easy topic to begin with because they do not create as much emotional involvement as people do. So it is easier to draw logical connections between details and the conclusion stated by our topic sentence. This assignment is not too different from actual assignments that people do in business or in the academic life. For instance, a real estate appraiser or a building inspector has to make a report to the company or customer about the value or condition of a building. One paragraph in the report could very well be like the ones you write for this assignment. Those in academic fields also frequently have to support an opinion about an object. An archeologist, for example, might have to provide several details and inferences based upon them to support a major inference that a building was use as a dwelling, as a factory (e.g., for the production of pottery), or for religious ceremonies.

LIMIT THE TOPIC.

Write a paragraph about the building or house that you described in the Exploration 2 assignment (Chapter 18) or another one that you have described in detail (600 to 1500 words).

Limit the paragraph to ONE ASPECT of the building, to ONE PART of the building, or even to ONE ASPECT OF ONE PART of the building. For example, you could limit the paragraph to the marks or signs of use (one aspect). You could limit the paragraph to the entryway of the house. An even better choice would be to limit it to the inference that can be drawn from the marks of use on the entryway of the house. (See the illustration in the following explanation of the topic sentence.)

TOPIC SENTENCE

Near the beginning of the paragraph, provide a clear topic sentence that states a significant inference about the building, the main impression created by the aspect or part of the building that you have chosen. That

impression may be an inference that you made in your earlier paper about the building (Exploration 2). Or it could be a new inference that emerges from your evaluation of all of the details of that paper. (See THINKING ABOUT IT: FINDING THE BIG IDEA below.) For example, your topic sentence could read, "The door of this house appears to have opened for many children over the years."

A good topic sentence should contain a key phrase that states a ***reasoned opinion*** about the building--an opinion that is supported by reasons. In the case of a paper like this one the reasons are in the concrete details that support the topic sentence. A reasoned opinion differs from matters of fact and matters of personal taste. ***Matters of fact*** are statements that should be reasonably obvious from observation or by reference to an accepted source of information. For example, "The house is painted a dark brown" is a matter of fact. Matters of fact are not good topics for a paragraph because they really require just a sentence or two to adequately state them. In addition, when readers cannot see for themselves, they usually base their acceptance of matters of fact on the trustworthiness of the person making the statement rather than on the reasons for the statement. ***Matters of personal taste*** are statements that are based on person's individual likes or dislikes. For example, "The house is hideously ugly" is a matter of personal taste. Matters of personal taste make poor topic sentences because most readers are not interested in our personal likes or dislikes. The chart below shows why matters of reasoned opinion are the best choice for main ideas (in this case a topic sentence.

MATTER OF FACT	**MATTER OF REASONED OPINION**	**MATTER OF PERSONAL TASTE**
Easy agreement ←		→ Difficult agreement
Easy to find agreement by checking senses or reliable sources	Agreement can be found but only with adequate reasons	Very difficult to find agreement because likes and dislikes are very personal

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE 21-1: FACT, TASTE, AND REASONED OPINION

Evaluate each of these proposed topic sentences. Put each of them into a category—matter of fact (***F***), matter of reasoned opinion (***R***), or matter of personal taste (***T***). Put the correct letter in the blank at the end of each line. The first five sets have one of each kind of statement.

Set 1:

1. The three-story house on Yakima Street has bright white paint. _____
2. The three-story house on Yakima Street looks fabulous. _____
3. The owners of the three-story house on Yakima Street must take pride in their house. _____

Set 2:

1. A small house on Gig Harbor is really cute. _____
2. A small house on Gig Harbor appears to be decorated by a talented artist. _____
3. A small house on Gig Harbor has been painted several different shades of gray. _____

Set 3:

1. The owners of the house near Point Defiance have put furniture on their spacious front porch. _____
2. The owners of the house near Point Defiance must enjoy entertaining on their front porch. _____
3. The owners of the house near Point Defiance have created a wonderful impression with their decoration of their front porch. _____

Set 4:

1. An old house on Military Road must not have been inhabited for several years. _____
2. An old house on Military Road has decrepit roof, windows, doors, and siding. _____
3. An old house on Military Road is a disgrace to the neighborhood. _____

Set 5:

1. The front door of the house on 84th Street is really attractive. _____
2. The front door of the house on 84th Street is wide and made of oak. _____
3. The front door of the house on 84th Street shows that the owners want to welcome visitors. _____

Set 6:

1. This house in Oak Harbor has undergone several different periods of remodeling. _____
2. A house on North 17th Street really caught my eye. _____
3. The owners of a house on South Orchard Street must have just mowed their grass. _____
4. The owners of a house in Shelton don’t seem capable of throwing out old machines. _____
5. There is a three-car garage on the left side of this building in Port Orchard. _____
6. This house in the Proctor District looks very uninteresting. _____
7. This house in Lakewood seems to be home to a wide range of pets. _____
8. The porch on the right side of this house in Sumner has what appears to be a porch swing. _____
9. The trees in the planting bed in front of the Safeway store are many different shapes and colors. _____
10. The owners of this house in Puyallup seem to like outdoor sports. _____

11. The owners of a house in Auburn seem to like flowers.
12. The owners of a small house in Bremerton must be really strange.

THINKING ABOUT IT: FINDING THE BIG IDEA

In order to find the big idea--one significant enough to make a good topic sentence for a paragraph--you may find one or more of the following strategies helpful.

QUESTION YOUR DETAILS.

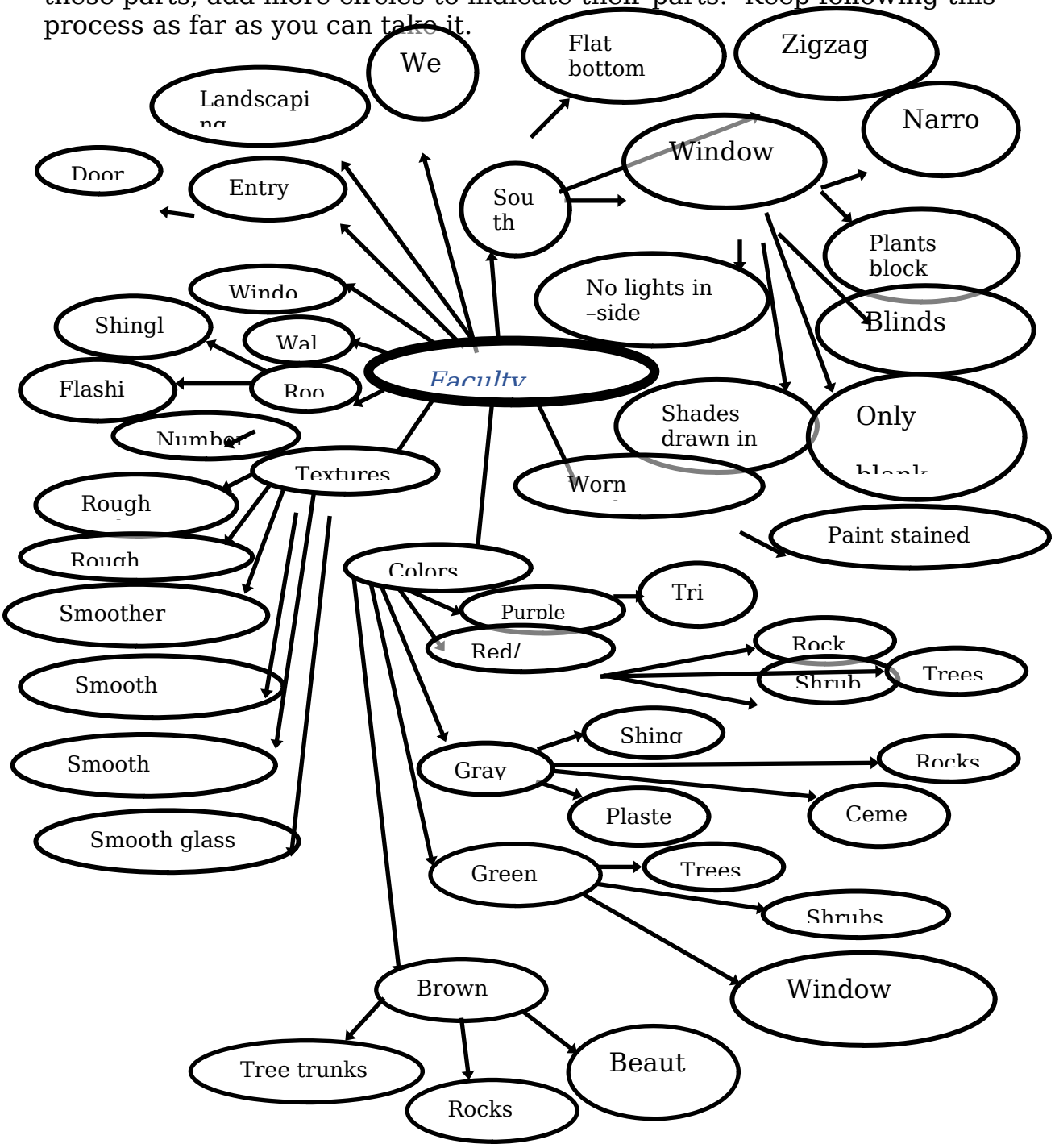
To find a topic sentence that goes beyond matters of fact, you need to consider ideas that go beyond what can be easily seen or assumed. In talking about a building, you can begin to think about the people who own or use the building. Making inferences about the people or what they have done to the building could give you an appropriate topic sentence. You might ask yourself what your details can say in answer to the following questions:

1. What kind of people live in or frequent this building?
2. What are their values or attitudes toward the building, responsibilities, life, and other people?
3. What has happened in and to the building?
4. How was it built or how has it been changed during its history?
5. What was the building's designer or builder thinking?
6. How has it been used or abused?

USE MIND MAPPING TO DRAFT A TOPIC SENTENCE.

Mind mapping is a technique for exploring and analyzing our ideas and for creating some order in them. In this process we visualize connections between parts of our topic and between those parts and other topics. The next page illustrates the first of couple of steps that will help in developing your ideas.

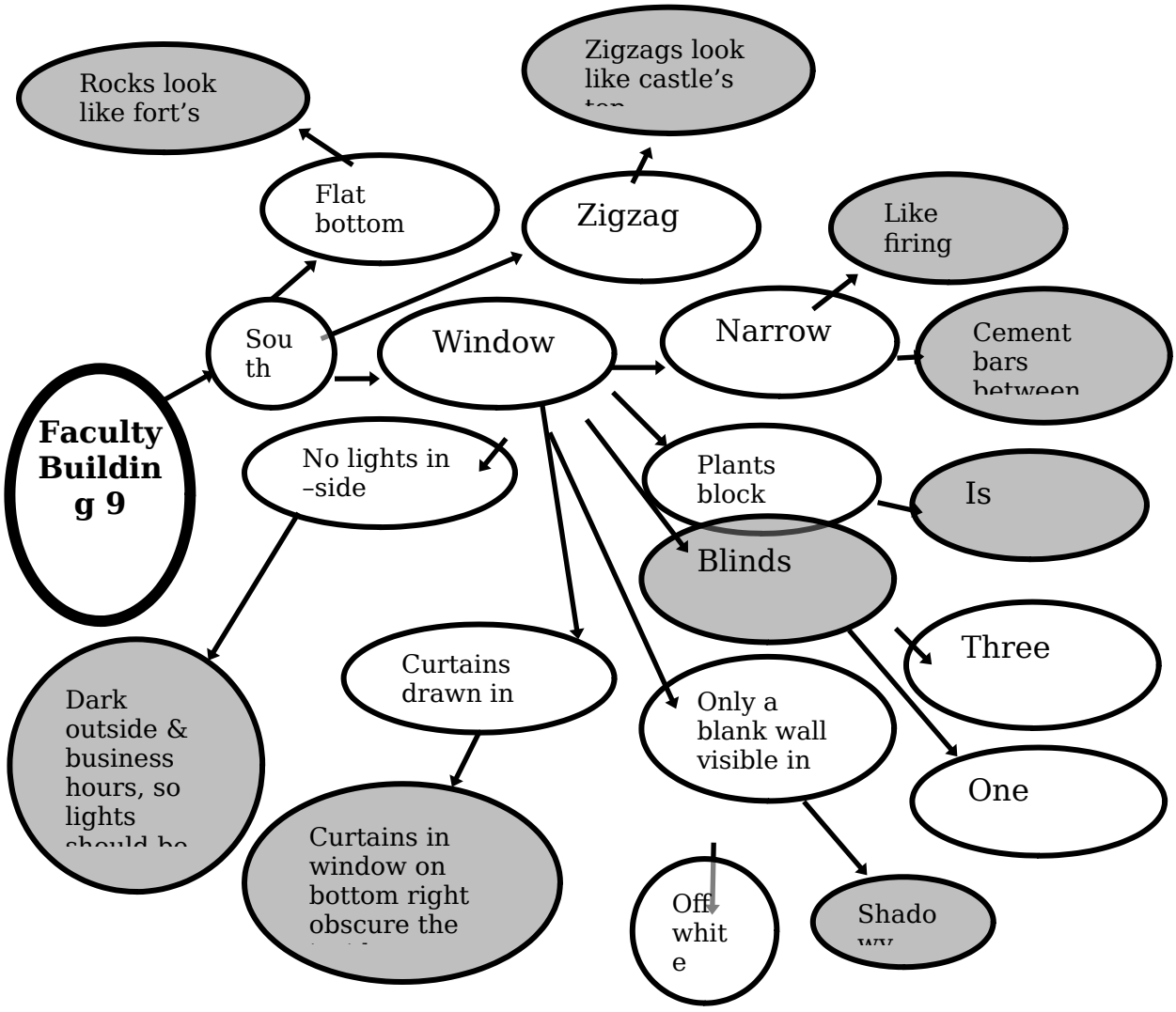
1. To create a mind map, begin by drawing a circle in the middle of a page. Label that circle with your topic. Then start to draw other circles around that the first one to represent parts of the larger topic. For each one of these parts, add more circles to indicate their parts. Keep following this process as far as you can take it.



Notice that in this example some the major categories are parts of the building, like roof, walls, and other categories are aspects, like colors and

textures. Many of the details fit two or more of the categories. For example, the shrubs are mapped under different colors and under the windows on the south side of the building. At this point in your thinking, you can allow for duplication of details.

Identify areas of your topic that seem particularly rich in details, significance, or connection with your interests or experience. Limit the original topic to just one of these rich parts. Then remap that part by adding circles that represent specific examples, significance of details, or connections with completely separate topics or with parts of the original, larger topic.



In this revised mapping, notice the shaded circles. They represent some inferences and comparisons that can lead to the drafting of a topic sentence. Where can you draw connections between these inferences and comparisons? What kind of larger inference can you write that will summarize most of the inferences in shaded circles?

PARAGRAPH BODY

The body of the paragraph contains all the information--details and explanations of them--that support the topic sentence.

CONCRETE DETAILS

The primary material of the body of the paragraph should be the concrete details that support the topic sentence. The challenge at this point is to keep the details as concrete as they were in our original observation of the building. We are constantly tempted to summarize several concrete details in one sentence. For example, you might want to say that several parts of a house have been worn by people's passing by instead of describing the kind of wear at each point of the house. It is more affecting to say something like this: "The *dull red* paint has been worn away from the *right side* of the door sill, and even some of the wood from the sill seems to have worn away by the feet of the children who have *shuffled* over it." Though summary is necessary in some kinds of writing, that kind of writing lacks the emotional impact that the concrete details do.

Be sure that the details that you include support the idea of your topic sentence. Extra details that are only interesting to you may not help your readers to appreciate the accuracy of your topic sentence. When a paper is filled with unnecessary words, they weaken the effect of the good details in the paragraph. Almost any details that support your topic sentence are good ones. You may find additional useful details in your rough draft, in your memory of the building, or even in another visit to the building. Almost any details but invented ones are acceptable.

COMPARISONS AND INFERENCE

A comparison that helps to support your topic sentence will improve the paragraph. A brief comparison can often say as much as several sentences of concrete details. A comparison may be one in the original paper about the building or one that becomes apparent from your analysis of your

details. As with the details, you should avoid comparisons that are entertaining but that do not support the topic sentence.

Although the entire structure of the paragraph--topic sentence and details--is based on a large inference, often other inferences are needed to support the larger one. For example, if your paragraph is based on the inference that details of belongings around a house show that the owner of is forgetful, you might mention a rake in the yard. Just the fact that there is a rake in the yard doesn't clearly say that the owner is forgetful. You need to add the extra step of saying that the rake's lying in deep grass indicates that the owner probably was interrupted in the middle of yard work and hasn't *remembered* the job that he had started weeks ago. Drawing a connection between the rake and the deep grass illustrates one job long forgotten, which in turn illustrated a poor memory.

USE A SPATIAL ORGANIZATION.

To help readers recognize your subject, the beginning of the paragraph should identify the building you are talking about. To do so, you could mention its location, name, or some distinguishing feature. If you need an extra sentence for this job, you should put it before the sentence that states your main idea about the building, the topic sentence. After the topic sentence, the paragraph should follow a spatial organization, just as the paper on which it was based did. But exactly the same organization may not work. The original paragraph may have begun at the top of a house and worked down. But this paragraph's details may be limited to ones that involve just the yard and porch of the house. Since these details are on very close to the same level, a left to right or right to left order may be more appropriate than the original order. Finally, if a paragraph is long (around 200 words) or if it has to stand alone (outside of a longer piece of writing), you may want to end the paragraph with a sentence that refers to the key concept in the topic sentence. A simple repetition of the topic sentence sounds redundant, but an indirect reference to the key concept will reinforce the paragraph's main idea.

PROVIDE TRANSITIONS.

One of the most important techniques writers use to show the clarity of their thinking is the use of transitional expressions. These expressions identify for the readers specific connections that the writer wants them to see. Here are some of the ways in which you can connect ideas within this kind of paragraph.

- Identify the starting point for your supporting details so that your readers can connect the details to a general picture of the building.
- Link each sentence to the preceding one by using directional transitions. Each time you move from one part of the building to another, explain clearly where you are going--which direction and how far--for example, "two feet to the right of the door."
- Link each sentence to the topic of the paragraph and to preceding sentences by using repetition, synonyms, and pronouns. You can use a word like *building* a few times in a paragraph. You can also use synonyms like *structure*, *shop*, or *house*. Another way of linking ideas is to use obviously connected terms. For example, a reader can easily see that terms like *door*, *window*, and *wall*, refer to those parts of the building or house that the paragraph discusses.
- Link sentences with pronouns--like *it, they, he,* and *she.* Correct use of these terms will show how a sentence is related to the preceding one and to the topic sentence.
- Link supporting sentences to the key concept of the paragraph by using repetition and synonyms. For example, if your key concept relies on marks that have been made on a building, you could actually repeat the word *marks,* or you could use words that refer to specific kinds of marks, like *scrape, scratch, smudge, spot, blotch*, or *smear*.
- Finally, there are cases where you just want to signal that you have another detail that supports the topic sentence very much as the preceding one does. In those cases you may want to use transitional words that signal a similarity, words like *also, too, as well, additionally, moreover, further*, and *furthermore*.

The exercise on the next page will give you some practice at spotting the use of the topic sentence and the use of transitions devices like directional links, pronouns, repetition, synonyms, and transitional terms.

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE 21-2: TOPIC SENTENCE AND TRANSITIONAL DEVICES

(1) The front door of the red house in Longbranch must have been opened for many children over the years. (2) Little feet have cut a path from the play yard at the right of the house, across the grass, up the steps and over the porch to the front door. (3) On the porch the path, cut through the dull paint, is partly blockaded by children's toys. (4) To the right of the path sits a red and white tricycle with one lopsided wheel. (5) Also, a rainbow of brightly colored plastic blocks arcs across the path and the left half of the porch. (6) Moreover, the red paint has also been worn away from the right side of the door sill, and even some of the wood of the sill seems to have been rubbed away by the feet of the children who have shuffled over it. (7) The screen of the screen door has been pushed out of its frame by little hands. (8) Dirty fingers have also left smudges around the screen door's handle	**For the adjacent paragraph mark the following items:** 1. the topic sentence 2. a ending reference to the topic sentence 3. a sentence that identifies the starting point and method of organization 4. words that refer in some way to children 5. words that provide evidence the key concept (children's presence) 6. words that show where the details are (directional links) 7. words that are used to connect sentences in other ways [If you wish, you can use the markings included with the items listed above use or use any marking you want to distinguish the items.]

CONCLUSION 1 CHECKLIST

9. PLAN

- **DUE DATE IS _____**
- **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
- **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the topic to one major inference about one part or one aspect or one part of one aspect of the building.
- **MAIN IDEA [TOPIC SENTENCE]:** Near the beginning of the paragraph, provide a topic sentence that clearly states one important idea about the building.
  - Limit (narrow) the topic and the key concept about the topic.
  - Avoid matters of fact and personal taste.

10. ORGANIZE

- Begin with an identification of the building.
- State the topic sentence.
- Use a SPATIAL organization for the supporting details, comparisons, and inferences.
- (Optional) End with a reference to the idea of the topic sentence.

11. WRITE—IN THE BODY OF THE PARAGRAPH INCLUDE

- **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Provide concrete details that support the topic sentence.
- **COMPARISONS:** Provide comparisons that support the topic sentence.
- **INFERENCES**: Provide clear explanations of details so that readers can easily see how they support the topic sentence.

12. EVALUATE AND REVISE

- **MAIN IDEA [TOPIC SENTENCE]**
  - Limited
  - Not a matter of fact or personal taste
- **ORGANIZATION**
  - Begin with identification of building and topic sentence.
  - Use spatial organization for the rest of the paragraph.
- **DETAILS, COMPARISONS AND INFERNECES** provide adequate support for the main ideas.
- **TRANSITIONS**
  - Identify your starting point.
  - Wherever helpful, link each detail by direction and distance from the location of the previous detail.
  - Use repetition and linking terms to emphasize how each sentence is related to the preceding one and to the idea of the topic sentence.
- **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**

- **SPECIAL ITEMS TO PROOFREAD FOR:_____**

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE 21-3: EVALUATION OF PARAGRAPHS

INSTRUCTIONS: Evaluate and grade each of these six paragraphs according to the Conclusion 1 Checklist. Be sure to identify the topic sentence. Decide whether the topic sentence avoids matters of fact and personal taste. Evaluate it for narrowness (how well its topic and the key concept are limited). Evaluate the details for amount, concreteness, and relevance to the topic sentence. Evaluate the organization and transitions. (You may also evaluate the paragraph for grammar, punctuation, and spelling if they have a major effect on your opinion of the paragraph.)

1. The best feature of the house is the large double doors. The doors are oversized as if they were expecting to bring in large items through them. On each side are large windows and a window at the top in the shape of a half circle made of stained glass. The door is made of oak and has brass knobs and door knockers. There are large dried floral wreaths on each door to help add to the welcome look. At the bottom of the door are brass kick plates and the door has a small muddy had print that appears to belong to a child that lives there.

2. The double front doors of the Lutheran Church in Brown's Point are an inviting welcome to parishioners. A gray, aggregate concrete path winds its way to the porch through freshly mowed grass that smells of spring. Rhododendrons grow amidst other deciduous shrubs inside two, seven-foot square flowerbeds flanking the entrance. An open rectangular porch shelters the doors as well as a modest, wooden bench like the kind you would find in front of an old general store. The doors themselves are made of wood, painted a Technicolor forest green and have shiny golden knobs. Early morning sunshine filters into both sides of the doors through six, one-foot square windows which are embellished with stained glass and add to the effect of warmth and light to this pleasant, little church on the hill in Brown's Point.

3. Churches are beautiful and useful even though they are old. This church is in a residential area surrounded by houses. There are always cars in its parking lot; as if someone is always home. I see on top of a worn, gray, shingled roof a beautiful stain glass window. Usually most churches use natural sun light to illuminate the parish room. Stain glass makes it so much more beautiful on the inside to see the many colors of light. Further down the cracked and weathered red bricks. I see another window, but this one is larger. The window has light lacy curtains; opened to a wall covered in children's art work that probably is a classroom or a Sunday school room. People could possibly rehearse choir verses in the main parish room however; this always seems so mystical and beautiful when you hear a good choir. Also this church could be used for weddings,

receptions, or any event to benefit good people. Yet this is a very beautiful place to hold events and its age only makes it more becoming.

4. It is obvious that the owners of this suburban home are the least bit concerned with the appearance of their cedar fence, and only concerned with its duties. This cedar fence surrounds the whole back half of the house, so it is most likely used for privacy, to keep noise pollution out, or maybe even to keep small children and animals in. This is obvious due to its over bearing height. The fence is weathered and greatly stained from nails that have leaked rust. Also, there are maple trees that stand next to the fence that have lost their leaves. The leaves have deteriorated on the fence, which has made it appear moldy and slimy, much like the skin of a dead fish. At the end of the right side of the fence, four dirt brown polls have been replaced. Maybe the fence had rotted or had been broken. It is clear that the owners of this suburban home are pleased with the duties of the fence, and plan to keep it standing.

5. The big front glassy windows of the new white house on Norpoint Way seems to be for siniors. Because even from 3 meters further of the house you can see the inside of the house, because the inside has very light and is good for inhabitance to live there. So they can see things and find thing very well. The front door of the house is also white and has a gold knob and there is no steps at the main door, So siniors can entered the house easily. There is an almost small yard in front of the house which is full of red flowers and potato bushes. Probably the people who are living there like to spend their time raising plants.

6. The front yard tries its hardest to hide the gray house. The brown and yellow dried grass stands tall, two and a half feet tall to be exact. It has not been mowed or even watered in a very long time. To the right there is an eight to ten foot tall rhododendron, which hides the six foot glass window. To the left there is another rhododendron, also brown and yellow, it appears to have never been pruned. Overgrown black berry bushes cling to the side of the house, growing up the side to catch any rays of the sun it can. Between the house and the road is the only real color in the front yard, which is a fifteen foot tall purple plum tree. Driving by this house you could easily miss it, seeing only the over growth of all the bushes, trees, and grass.

CHAPTER 21: SUPPORTING AN IDEA BOUT AN OBJECT—DRAWING AND SUPPORTING CONCLUSIONS—SPATIAL ORDER

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THE GOAL OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- Understand that a topic sentence, organization, and transitional devices are important to effectively present your reasoned opinion
- Develop a method of analyzing details, inferences, and comparisons that will enable you to draw a reasoned opinion
- Distinguish between reasoned opinions, matters of fact, and matters of personal taste
- Compose one reasoned opinion in a clear and limited topic sentence
- Support a topic sentence with concrete details, comparisons and inferences
- Organize a paragraph in a spatial pattern
- Connect ideas with a paragraph with transitional devices, particularly spatial terms

REASONS FOR PARAGRAPH ASSIGNMENTS

The purpose of these assignments is to develop the skill of drawing broader inferences than those in earlier papers and supporting each inference with relevant concrete details. In these assignments we will report a conclusion

(a reasoned opinion) near the beginning of a paragraph in what is called a topic sentence. The rest of each paragraph will then report the relevant concrete details that support our opinion. A reader of any college paper or business report will expect not only that we explain our thinking but also that we logically defend our thought. As an employee you may have a serious responsibility--for example, recommending disciplinary action for another employee or recommending that your company acquire a new facility or produce a new line of products. In cases like these, your employer expects that you analyze all the relevant details and support your recommendation with significant supporting detail. Unless you can line up convincing details to support your recommendation, the employer will have some reason to doubt your recommendation and your usefulness to the company. Most writing assignments in college are designed to require the same kind of effort in order to develop those thinking skills required for success in both business and in life.
The ability to draw reasoned opinions about objects and to support those opinions with factual details is important for people in the same academic and professional fields mentioned in earlier Chapter 18:

- Anthropologists
- Artists
- Literary critics
- Environmental scientists
- Geologists
- Healthcare professionals
- Buyers
- Real estate appraisers

PARAGRAPH CONSTRUCTION

Paragraphs are a writer's middle-sized unit of thought. The smaller unit is the sentence, which is defined by a subject and an assertion about that subject. The larger unit is the report, essay, or theme--all of which name a large piece of writing that contains several paragraphs and has a clearly defined purpose--including a subject and a specific idea about that subject. Paragraphing is a technique of organizing several sentences into a block of writing that has a specific, clear job function in development of the main idea of the report or essay. Without reference to the larger and smaller units of writing, the paragraph doesn't have a great deal of meaning. Despite that fact, this book contains several assignments for isolated paragraphs. Why? One reason is that these assignments will provide practice with the smaller units of writing before you tackle the larger, more complicated ones. Throughout these assignments you could consider each paragraph as just one paragraph in a series of paragraphs, all of which

function together to support the main idea of a longer report. A second reason for paragraph assignments is that some short writing jobs--for example, short essays on tests--require just one paragraph.

THINKING ABOUT IT: PARAGRAPHS AND INFERENCES

One way to think about the paragraph is to compare it with some of the inferences that you have formulated in earlier papers. In those papers you have pointed out several possible conclusions that a specific detail could suggest. Writing paragraphs requires that we evaluate the possible conclusions and settle on one that makes the most sense. Then in constructing the paragraph we connect one conclusion with several details (in contrast with connecting one detail with several conclusions as we did in earlier papers). These two processes--connecting one detail with several conclusions and connecting one conclusion with several details--may seem contradictory, but they are not. The first one--imagining possible conclusions--is the creative, exploratory part of the writing process. The second one--supporting one conclusion--is the reasoning, evaluative part of the process. Both parts are necessary to write well; we cannot do the second part well unless we have done the first part.

Because the job of the paragraph is to support one major inference, all the sentences of the paragraph need to contribute to accomplishing that job. Each of the sentences of a paragraph should have some details that support the paragraph's main idea. Thus we can identify three characteristics of paragraph that demonstrates clear thinking:

- The sentences talk about the same subject (in contrast with the subjects covered in other paragraphs of a report).
- All of the sentences support one idea about the subject.
- No sentence can be eliminated without weakening the support for the paragraph's main idea.

THE TOPIC SENTENCE DEFINES THE PARAGRAPH.

Although all of these characteristics of paragraphs are important, the one that is probably the most challenging is the second one--making sure that the sentences of a paragraph support one idea about the subject. The key to making sure that the sentences support one idea is to make sure that every paragraph has a topic sentence. The ***topic sentence*** is simply the sentence that sums up the point of the whole paragraph. (If you are familiar with the term *thesis sentence*, you can think of the topic sentence as playing the same role in a paragraph as the thesis sentence plays in an

essay.) Although the term *topic sentence* implies that its main job is to name the topic, its job involves much more. In addition to mentioning the topic, the topic sentence must link the topic to the paragraph's key concept--the general inference or reasoned opinion that we are presenting about the topic. When we have a well-phrased topic sentence, we can use it as a test to evaluate the other sentences of the paragraph. When we look at each sentence of the paragraph, we should be able to see how it supports the idea of the topic sentence. If we cannot see the connection (or, more importantly, if a reader cannot see the connection), the sentence needs one of two remedies. It needs to be removed from the paragraph (and, perhaps, be placed in another paragraph where it would be more relevant). Or it needs an explanation of its connection to the topic sentence.

PLACEMENT OF THE TOPIC SENTENCE

Writers are often told that a topic sentence can be place in many different locations in a paragraph or can even be left entirely out of the paragraph as long as the main idea of the paragraph is clear. Though these pieces of advice are correct, you may notice in your reading that you can most easily read those pieces in which the author regularly places topic sentences near the beginnings of paragraphs. Because ease in reading is critical for our readers' understanding and appreciation of our idea, it is probably best to get into the habit of putting topic sentence near the beginning of paragraphs. On rereading our writing, we can then decide whether the placement is best or whether the paragraph would be just as effective if we omitted the topic sentence.

Although the topic sentence should normally be close to the beginning of the paragraph, it does not always have to be the first sentence. In most good expository writing, like the writing in most textbooks, the topic sentence is most frequently the first sentence of a paragraph. But it can almost as often be the second or third sentence of the paragraph. This placement is often required because the topic of the paragraph needs a sentence of introduction or a connection to the topic of the preceding paragraph. Thus writers sometimes use introducing or connecting sentence to focus our attention on the topic sentence and to make its relevance more evident. One way to verify the importance of putting the topic sentence near the paragraph's beginning is to look at one of your textbooks. Texts for subjects like history or psychology make the best examples because they usually have longer paragraphs than some others, like math. If you are underlining or highlighting important sentences in the text, looking at the book should reveal a pattern. A sentence near the beginning of most paragraphs should be marked because it is the main idea of the paragraph, the topic sentence. This is not to say that other sentences are not important

enough to mark, but the topic sentences are almost always important enough to mark.

GUIDELINES FOR PARAGRAPH ASSIGNMENTS

Unless your instructor gives your different directions, each paragraph assignment should follow the following standards.

LENGTH

100-200 words--about 7 to 15 sentences

FORMAT

- Double space (skip every other line)
- Use a standard, black 12-point font
- Leave 1-inch margins on sides, top, and bottom

ROUGH AND FINAL DRAFTS:

Hand in at least one rough draft and a clean final copy. “Clean” means as free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors as you know how to make it.

SPECIAL ITEMS TO PROOFREAD FOR

On each paper your instructor may assign specific elements of grammar, punctuation, or spelling to proofread for. These are items which you have been covered in class and which you are now responsible for applying to your papers.

CONCLUSION 1: A PARAGRAPH ABOUT A BUILDING

REASONS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

This assignment requires writing a paragraph that supports one idea about a building--either the one you described in Exploration 2 or another building you can describe. Although most jobs do not require writing about buildings, buildings are a relatively easy topic to begin with because they do not create as much emotional involvement as people do. So it is easier to draw logical connections between details and the conclusion stated by our topic sentence. This assignment is not too different from actual assignments that people do in business or in the academic life. For instance, a real estate appraiser or a building inspector has to make a report to the company or customer about the value or condition of a building. One paragraph in the report could very well be like the ones you write for this assignment. Those in academic fields also frequently have to support an opinion about an object. An archeologist, for example, might have to provide several details and inferences based upon them to support a major inference that a building was use as a dwelling, as a factory (e.g., for the production of pottery), or for religious ceremonies.

LIMIT THE TOPIC.

Write a paragraph about the building or house that you described in the Exploration 2 assignment (Chapter 18) or another one that you have described in detail (600 to 1500 words).

Limit the paragraph to ONE ASPECT of the building, to ONE PART of the building, or even to ONE ASPECT OF ONE PART of the building. For example, you could limit the paragraph to the marks or signs of use (one aspect). You could limit the paragraph to the entryway of the house. An even better choice would be to limit it to the inference that can be drawn from the marks of use on the entryway of the house. (See the illustration in the following explanation of the topic sentence.)

TOPIC SENTENCE

Near the beginning of the paragraph, provide a clear topic sentence that states a significant inference about the building, the main impression created by the aspect or part of the building that you have chosen. That

impression may be an inference that you made in your earlier paper about the building (Exploration 2). Or it could be a new inference that emerges from your evaluation of all of the details of that paper. (See THINKING ABOUT IT: FINDING THE BIG IDEA below.) For example, your topic sentence could read, "The door of this house appears to have opened for many children over the years."

A good topic sentence should contain a key phrase that states a ***reasoned opinion*** about the building--an opinion that is supported by reasons. In the case of a paper like this one the reasons are in the concrete details that support the topic sentence. A reasoned opinion differs from matters of fact and matters of personal taste. ***Matters of fact*** are statements that should be reasonably obvious from observation or by reference to an accepted source of information. For example, "The house is painted a dark brown" is a matter of fact. Matters of fact are not good topics for a paragraph because they really require just a sentence or two to adequately state them. In addition, when readers cannot see for themselves, they usually base their acceptance of matters of fact on the trustworthiness of the person making the statement rather than on the reasons for the statement. ***Matters of personal taste*** are statements that are based on person's individual likes or dislikes. For example, "The house is hideously ugly" is a matter of personal taste. Matters of personal taste make poor topic sentences because most readers are not interested in our personal likes or dislikes. The chart below shows why matters of reasoned opinion are the best choice for main ideas (in this case a topic sentence.

MATTER OF FACT	**MATTER OF REASONED OPINION**	**MATTER OF PERSONAL TASTE**
Easy agreement		Difficult agreement
Easy to find agreement by checking senses or reliable sources	Agreement can be found but only with adequate reasons	Very difficult to find agreement because likes and dislikes are very personal

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE 21-1: FACT, TASTE, AND REASONED OPINION

Evaluate each of these proposed topic sentences. Put each of them into a category—matter of fact (***F***), matter of reasoned opinion (***R***), or matter of personal taste (***T***). Put the correct letter in the blank at the end of each line. The first five sets have one of each kind of statement.

Set 1:

4. The three-story house on Yakima Street has bright white paint. _____
5. The three-story house on Yakima Street looks fabulous. _____
6. The owners of the three-story house on Yakima Street must take pride in their house. _____

Set 2:

4. A small house on Gig Harbor is really cute. _____
5. A small house on Gig Harbor appears to be decorated by a talented artist. _____
6. A small house on Gig Harbor has been painted several different shades of gray. _____

Set 3:

4. The owners of the house near Point Defiance have put furniture on their spacious front porch. _____
5. The owners of the house near Point Defiance must enjoy entertaining on their front porch. _____
6. The owners of the house near Point Defiance have created a wonderful impression with their decoration of their front porch. _____

Set 4:

4. An old house on Military Road must not have been inhabited for several years. _____
5. An old house on Military Road has decrepit roof, windows, doors, and siding. _____
6. An old house on Military Road is a disgrace to the neighborhood. _____

Set 5:

4. The front door of the house on 84th Street is really attractive. _____
5. The front door of the house on 84th Street is wide and made of oak. _____
6. The front door of the house on 84th Street shows that the owners want to welcome visitors. _____

Set 6:

13. This house in Oak Harbor has undergone several different periods of remodeling. _____
14. A house on North 17th Street really caught my eye. _____
15. The owners of a house on South Orchard Street must have just mowed their grass. _____
16. The owners of a house in Shelton don't seem capable of throwing out old machines. _____
17. There is a three-car garage on the left side of this building in Port Orchard. _____
18. This house in the Proctor District looks very uninteresting. _____
19. This house in Lakewood seems to be home to a wide range of pets. _____
20. The porch on the right side of this house in Sumner has what appears to be a porch swing. _____
21. The trees in the planting bed in front of the Safeway store are many different shapes and colors. _____
22. The owners of this house in Puyallup seem to like outdoor sports. _____

23. The owners of a house in Auburn seem to like flowers.
24. The owners of a small house in Bremerton must be really strange.

THINKING ABOUT IT: FINDING THE BIG IDEA

In order to find the big idea--one significant enough to make a good topic sentence for a paragraph--you may find one or more of the following strategies helpful.

QUESTION YOUR DETAILS.

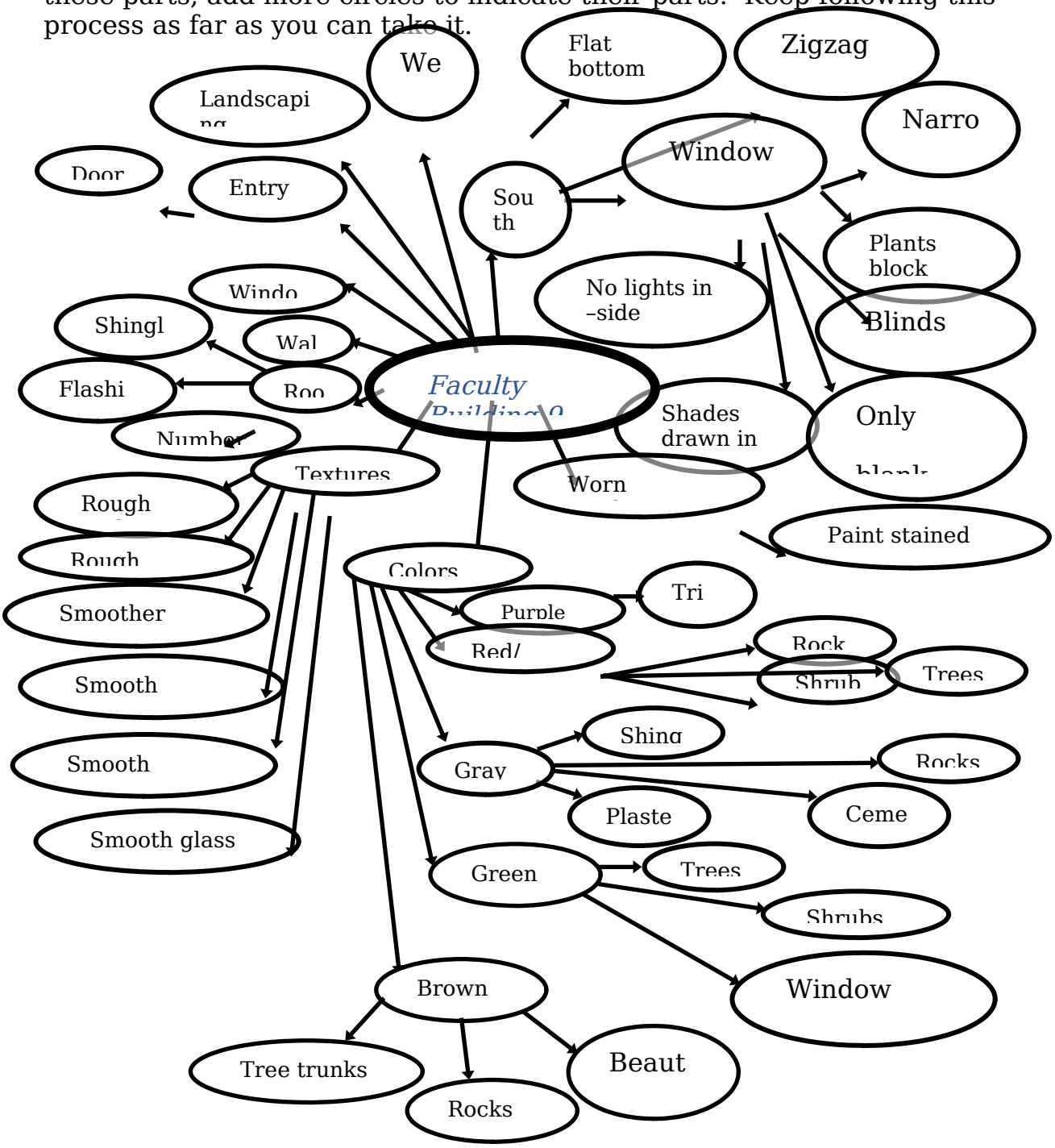
To find a topic sentence that goes beyond matters of fact, you need to consider ideas that go beyond what can be easily seen or assumed. In talking about a building, you can begin to think about the people who own or use the building. Making inferences about the people or what they have done to the building could give you an appropriate topic sentence. You might ask yourself what your details can say in answer to the following questions:

7. What kind of people live in or frequent this building?
8. What are their values or attitudes toward the building, responsibilities, life, and other people?
9. What has happened in and to the building?
10. How was it built or how has it been changed during its history?
11. What was the building's designer or builder thinking?
12. How has it been used or abused?

USE MIND MAPPING TO DRAFT A TOPIC SENTENCE.

Mind mapping is a technique for exploring and analyzing our ideas and for creating some order in them. In this process we visualize connections between parts of our topic and between those parts and other topics. The next page illustrates the first of couple of steps that will help in developing your ideas.

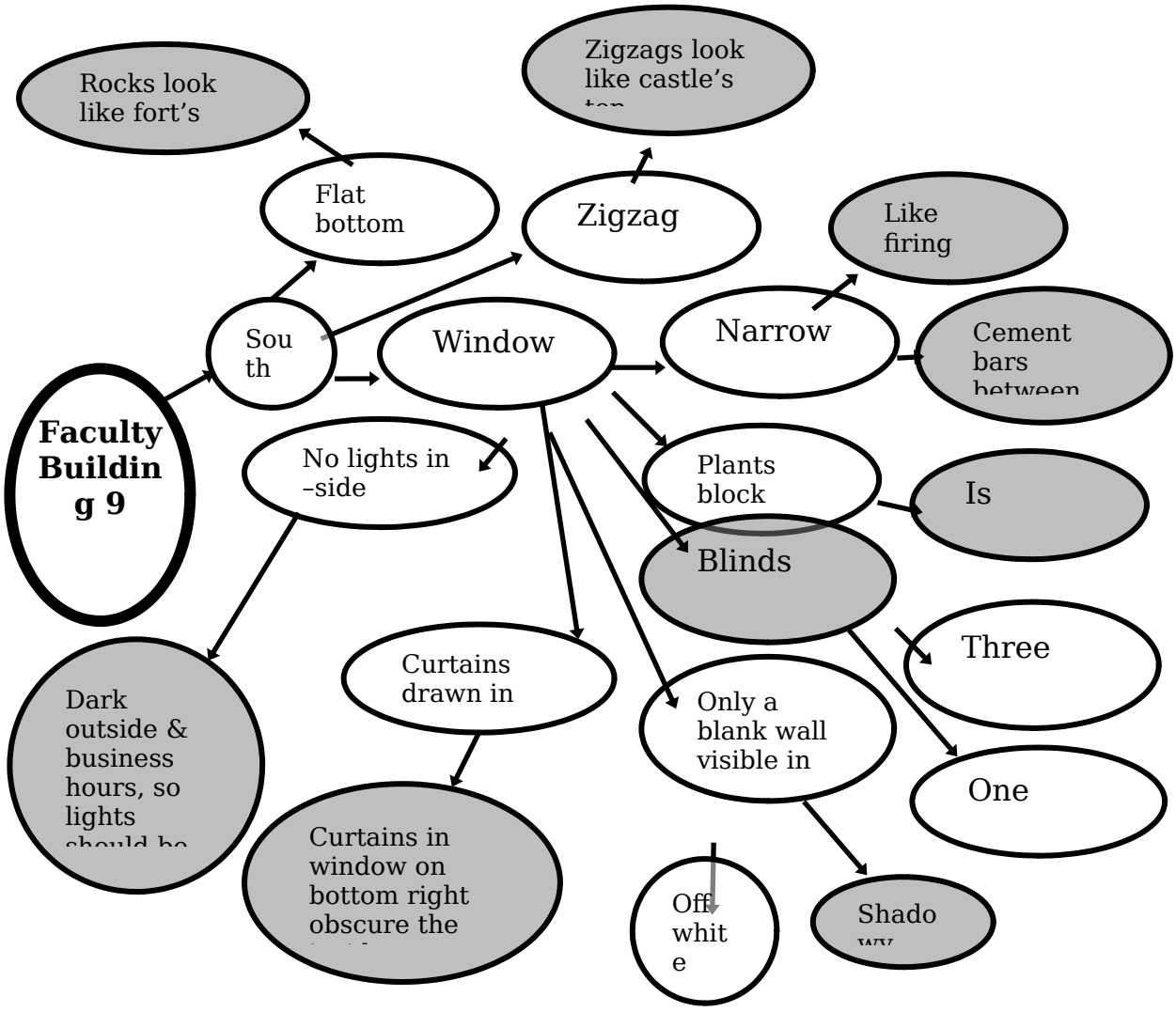
2. To create a mind map, begin by drawing a circle in the middle of a page. Label that circle with your topic. Then start to draw other circles around that the first one to represent parts of the larger topic. For each one of these parts, add more circles to indicate their parts. Keep following this process as far as you can take it.



Notice that in this example some the major categories are parts of the building, like roof, walls, and other categories are aspects, like colors and

textures. Many of the details fit two or more of the categories. For example, the shrubs are mapped under different colors and under the windows on the south side of the building. At this point in your thinking, you can allow for duplication of details.

Identify areas of your topic that seem particularly rich in details, significance, or connection with your interests or experience. Limit the original topic to just one of these rich parts. Then remap that part by adding circles that represent specific examples, significance of details, or connections with completely separate topics or with parts of the original, larger topic.



In this revised mapping, notice the shaded circles. They represent some inferences and comparisons that can lead to the drafting of a topic sentence. Where can you draw connections between these inferences and comparisons? What kind of larger inference can you write that will summarize most of the inferences in shaded circles?

PARAGRAPH BODY

The body of the paragraph contains all the information--details and explanations of them--that support the topic sentence.

CONCRETE DETAILS

The primary material of the body of the paragraph should be the concrete details that support the topic sentence. The challenge at this point is to keep the details as concrete as they were in our original observation of the building. We are constantly tempted to summarize several concrete details in one sentence. For example, you might want to say that several parts of a house have been worn by people's passing by instead of describing the kind of wear at each point of the house. It is more affecting to say something like this: "The *dull red* paint has been worn away from the *right side* of the door sill, and even some of the wood from the sill seems to have worn away by the feet of the children who have *shuffled* over it." Though summary is necessary in some kinds of writing, that kind of writing lacks the emotional impact that the concrete details do.

Be sure that the details that you include support the idea of your topic sentence. Extra details that are only interesting to you may not help your readers to appreciate the accuracy of your topic sentence. When a paper is filled with unnecessary words, they weaken the effect of the good details in the paragraph. Almost any details that support your topic sentence are good ones. You may find additional useful details in your rough draft, in your memory of the building, or even in another visit to the building. Almost any details but invented ones are acceptable.

COMPARISONS AND INFERENCE

A comparison that helps to support your topic sentence will improve the paragraph. A brief comparison can often say as much as several sentences of concrete details. A comparison may be one in the original paper about the building or one that becomes apparent from your analysis of your

details. As with the details, you should avoid comparisons that are entertaining but that do not support the topic sentence.

Although the entire structure of the paragraph--topic sentence and details--is based on a large inference, often other inferences are needed to support the larger one. For example, if your paragraph is based on the inference that details of belongings around a house show that the owner of is forgetful, you might mention a rake in the yard. Just the fact that there is a rake in the yard doesn't clearly say that the owner is forgetful. You need to add the extra step of saying that the rake's lying in deep grass indicates that the owner probably was interrupted in the middle of yard work and hasn't *remembered* the job that he had started weeks ago. Drawing a connection between the rake and the deep grass illustrates one job long forgotten, which in turn illustrated a poor memory.

USE A SPATIAL ORGANIZATION.

To help readers recognize your subject, the beginning of the paragraph should identify the building you are talking about. To do so, you could mention its location, name, or some distinguishing feature. If you need an extra sentence for this job, you should put it before the sentence that states your main idea about the building, the topic sentence. After the topic sentence, the paragraph should follow a spatial organization, just as the paper on which it was based did. But exactly the same organization may not work. The original paragraph may have begun at the top of a house and worked down. But this paragraph's details may be limited to ones that involve just the yard and porch of the house. Since these details are on very close to the same level, a left to right or right to left order may be more appropriate than the original order. Finally, if a paragraph is long (around 200 words) or if it has to stand alone (outside of a longer piece of writing), you may want to end the paragraph with a sentence that refers to the key concept in the topic sentence. A simple repetition of the topic sentence sounds redundant, but an indirect reference to the key concept will reinforce the paragraph's main idea.

PROVIDE TRANSITIONS.

One of the most important techniques writers use to show the clarity of their thinking is the use of transitional expressions. These expressions identify for the readers specific connections that the writer wants them to see. Here are some of the ways in which you can connect ideas within this kind of paragraph.

- Identify the starting point for your supporting details so that your readers can connect the details to a general picture of the building.
- Link each sentence to the preceding one by using directional transitions. Each time you move from one part of the building to another, explain clearly where you are going--which direction and how far--for example, "two feet to the right of the door."
- Link each sentence to the topic of the paragraph and to preceding sentences by using repetition, synonyms, and pronouns. You can use a word like *building* a few times in a paragraph. You can also use synonyms like *structure*, *shop*, or *house*. Another way of linking ideas is to use obviously connected terms. For example, a reader can easily see that terms like *door*, *window*, and *wall*, refer to those parts of the building or house that the paragraph discusses.
- Link sentences with pronouns--like *it, they, he,* and *she.* Correct use of these terms will show how a sentence is related to the preceding one and to the topic sentence.
- Link supporting sentences to the key concept of the paragraph by using repetition and synonyms. For example, if your key concept relies on marks that have been made on a building, you could actually repeat the word *marks,* or you could use words that refer to specific kinds of marks, like *scrape, scratch, smudge, spot, blotch*, or *smear*.
- Finally, there are cases where you just want to signal that you have another detail that supports the topic sentence very much as the preceding one does. In those cases you may want to use transitional words that signal a similarity, words like *also, too, as well, additionally, moreover, further*, and *furthermore*.

The exercise on the next page will give you some practice at spotting the use of the topic sentence and the use of transitions devices like directional links, pronouns, repetition, synonyms, and transitional terms.

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE 21-2: TOPIC SENTENCE AND TRANSITIONAL DEVICES

(1) The front door of the red house in Longbranch must have been opened for many children over the years. (2) Little feet have cut a path from the play yard at the right of the house, across the grass, up the steps and over the porch to the front door. (3) On the porch the path, cut through the dull paint, is partly blockaded by children's toys. (4) To the right of the path sits a red and white tricycle with one lopsided wheel. (5) Also, a rainbow of brightly colored plastic blocks arcs across the path and the left half of the porch. (6) Moreover, the red paint has also been worn away from the right side of the door sill, and even some of the wood of the sill seems to have been rubbed away by the feet of the children who have shuffled over it. (7) The screen of the screen door has been pushed out of its frame by little hands. (8) Dirty fingers have also left smudges around the screen door's handle and around the doorbell. (9) The fingers have made more	**For the adjacent paragraph mark the following items:** 8. the topic sentence 9. a ending reference to the topic sentence 10. a sentence that identifies the starting point and method of organization 11. words that refer in some way to children 12. words that provide evidence the key concept (children's presence) 13. words that show where the details are (directional links) 14. words that are used to connect sentences in other ways [If you wish, you can use the markings included with the items listed above use or use any marking you want to distinguish the items.]

CONCLUSION 1 CHECKLIST

13. PLAN

- **DUE DATE IS _____**
- **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
- **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the topic to one major inference about one part or one aspect or one part of one aspect of the building.
- **MAIN IDEA [TOPIC SENTENCE]:** Near the beginning of the paragraph, provide a topic sentence that clearly states one important idea about the building.
  - Limit (narrow) the topic and the key concept about the topic.
  - Avoid matters of fact and personal taste.

14. ORGANIZE

- Begin with an identification of the building.
- State the topic sentence.
- Use a SPATIAL organization for the supporting details, comparisons, and inferences.
- (Optional) End with a reference to the idea of the topic sentence.

15. WRITE—IN THE BODY OF THE PARAGRAPH INCLUDE

- **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Provide concrete details that support the topic sentence.
- **COMPARISONS:** Provide comparisons that support the topic sentence.
- **INFERENCES**: Provide clear explanations of details so that readers can easily see how they support the topic sentence.

16. EVALUATE AND REVISE

- **MAIN IDEA [TOPIC SENTENCE]**
  - Limited
  - Not a matter of fact or personal taste
- **ORGANIZATION**
  - Begin with identification of building and topic sentence.
  - Use spatial organization for the rest of the paragraph.
- **DETAILS, COMPARISONS AND INFERNECES** provide adequate support for the main ideas.
- **TRANSITIONS**
  - Identify your starting point.
  - Wherever helpful, link each detail by direction and distance from the location of the previous detail.
  - Use repetition and linking terms to emphasize how each sentence is related to the preceding one and to the idea of the topic sentence.
- **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**

- **SPECIAL ITEMS TO PROOFREAD FOR:_____**

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE 21-3: EVALUATION OF PARAGRAPHS

INSTRUCTIONS: Evaluate and grade each of these six paragraphs according to the Conclusion 1 Checklist. Be sure to identify the topic sentence. Decide whether the topic sentence avoids matters of fact and personal taste. Evaluate it for narrowness (how well its topic and the key concept are limited). Evaluate the details for amount, concreteness, and relevance to the topic sentence. Evaluate the organization and transitions. (You may also evaluate the paragraph for grammar, punctuation, and spelling if they have a major effect on your opinion of the paragraph.)

7. The best feature of the house is the large double doors. The doors are oversized as if they were expecting to bring in large items through them. On each side are large windows and a window at the top in the shape of a half circle made of stained glass. The door is made of oak and has brass knobs and door knockers. There are large dried floral wreaths on each door to help add to the welcome look. At the bottom of the door are brass kick plates and the door has a small muddy had print that appears to belong to a child that lives there.

8. The double front doors of the Lutheran Church in Brown's Point are an inviting welcome to parishioners. A gray, aggregate concrete path winds its way to the porch through freshly mowed grass that smells of spring. Rhododendrons grow amidst other deciduous shrubs inside two, seven-foot square flowerbeds flanking the entrance. An open rectangular porch shelters the doors as well as a modest, wooden bench like the kind you would find in front of an old general store. The doors themselves are made of wood, painted a Technicolor forest green and have shiny golden knobs. Early morning sunshine filters into both sides of the doors through six, one-foot square windows which are embellished with stained glass and add to the effect of warmth and light to this pleasant, little church on the hill in Brown's Point.

9. Churches are beautiful and useful even though they are old. This church is in a residential area surrounded by houses. There are always cars in its parking lot; as if someone is always home. I see on top of a worn, gray, shingled roof a beautiful stain glass window. Usually most churches use natural sun light to illuminate the parish room. Stain glass makes it so much more beautiful on the inside to see the many colors of light. Further down the cracked and weathered red bricks. I see another window, but this one is larger. The window has light lacy curtains; opened to a wall covered in children's art work that probably is a classroom or a Sunday school room. People could possibly rehearse choir verses in the main parish room however; this always seems so mystical and beautiful when you hear a good choir. Also this church could be used for weddings,

receptions, or any event to benefit good people. Yet this is a very beautiful place to hold events and its age only makes it more becoming.

10. It is obvious that the owners of this suburban home are the least bit concerned with the appearance of their cedar fence, and only concerned with its duties. This cedar fence surrounds the whole back half of the house, so it is most likely used for privacy, to keep noise pollution out, or maybe even to keep small children and animals in. This is obvious due to its over bearing height. The fence is weathered and greatly stained from nails that have leaked rust. Also, there are maple trees that stand next to the fence that have lost their leaves. The leaves have deteriorated on the fence, which has made it appear moldy and slimy, much like the skin of a dead fish. At the end of the right side of the fence, four dirt brown polls have been replaced. Maybe the fence had rotted or had been broken. It is clear that the owners of this suburban home are pleased with the duties of the fence, and plan to keep it standing.

11. The big front glassy windows of the new white house on Norpoint Way seems to be for siniors. Because even from 3 meters further of the house you can see the inside of the house, because the inside has very light and is good for inhabitance to live there. So they can see things and find thing very well. The front door of the house is also white and has a gold knob and there is no steps at the main door, So siniors can entered the house easily. There is an almost small yard in front of the house which is full of red flowers and potato bushes. Probably the people who are living there like to spend their time raising plants.

12. The front yard tries its hardest to hide the gray house. The brown and yellow dried grass stands tall, two and a half feet tall to be exact. It has not been mowed or even watered in a very long time. To the right there is an eight to ten foot tall rhododendron, which hides the six foot glass window. To the left there is another rhododendron, also brown and yellow, it appears to have never been pruned. Overgrown black berry bushes cling to the side of the house, growing up the side to catch any rays of the sun it can. Between the house and the road is the only real color in the front yard, which is a fifteen foot tall purple plum tree. Driving by this house you could easily miss it, seeing only the over growth of all the bushes, trees, and grass.

CHAPTER 22: SUPPORING AN IDEA ABOUT A PERSON—DRAWING AND SUPPORTING CONCLUSIONS—TIME ORDER

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THE GOAL OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- Refine a method of analyzing details, inferences, and comparisons that will enable you to draw a reasoned opinion
- Distinguish between reasoned opinions, matters of fact, and matters of personal taste about a person
- Improve your skill at composing one reasoned opinion in a clear and limited topic sentence
- Improve your skill at supporting a topic sentence with concrete details, comparisons and inferences
- Organize a paragraph in a chronological pattern
- Connect ideas with a paragraph with transitional devices, particularly chronological terms

REASONS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

The subject of this paragraph assignment is the person you wrote about in Exploration 4 (or another person whom you observed for 45 to 60 minutes). This paragraph is similar to one in a report required by many jobs. The list of jobs that require writing about people is almost endless. For example, most employers require periodic evaluations of employees' performance. Although some of the routine evaluations are done on a simple check-off or

rating form, the most informative evaluations are "narrative" evaluations. This kind of evaluation is not a simple narrative, but a combination of opinions and examples that support the opinion in concrete, factual detail. Psychologists, social workers, teachers, probation officers, and many others also have to provide similar evaluations of those they work with. In preparation for the reasoning required by various jobs, many college writing assignments follow the same pattern. They require that students make and support inferences about characters in literature; about individuals in case studies for business, psychology, or nursing; and even about people in students' lives when those individuals illustrate course concepts.

Writing about people brings out a major challenge that was not prominent in writing about an object like a building. When we write about people, we are likely to allow our emotions to play a larger role. Emotions are a good and important part of our lives, but in most professional situations we are expected to use our minds more than our hearts. We are expected to look at people objectively and use our critical thinking skills and the standards of our profession. When emotions cloud our judgment, we can be accused of acting unprofessionally. Although favoritism toward those whom we like is a danger, perhaps the larger danger is prejudice against those who are different from us or who seem unappealing for some reason. Both the professional and academic worlds require that we rely on reason and the standards of the field rather than on our personal preferences or cultural expectations.

The ability to draw reasoned opinions about persons and to support those opinions with factual details is important for people in the same academic and professional fields mentioned in earlier Chapter 19:

- Psychologists
- Sociologists
- Dramatic and literary critics
- Historians
- Counselors, social workers, and probation officers
- Lawyers
- Healthcare professionals
- Human resource personnel

LIMIT THE TOPIC.

Write a paragraph about the one person whom you described in the Exploration 4 assignment (Chapter 19) or another person whom you have

observed for 45 to 60 minutes and have described in detail (600 to 1500 words).

Limit the paragraph to ONE ASPECT of the person's PERSONALITY or MOOD, or ONE ASPECT of the person's ACTIVITY. The topic of a person's personality or mood can be even further limited to her specific feeling, attitude, or thought at the time. If we are writing about a person we know well, we are more likely to be sensitive to the person's moods than to general personality. On the other hand, we are more likely to attribute a stranger's behavior to personality than to mood. For example, if we see a person acting angrily, we might say of a friend that something has happened to make her angry and of a stranger that he is angry at life. This tendency can be a hazard in professional life because it can betray our prejudice toward or ignorance of professional associates. But in this assignment we will work within those limitations since our time is limited. The other possible topic for this paragraph is the activity of the person we observed. This is more like the kind of study that a supervisor might make in analyzing a job assignment rather than an evaluation of the performance of a person doing such an assignment.

TOPIC SENTENCE

Near the beginning of the paragraph, provide a clear topic sentence that states a significant inference about the person or her activity, the main impression created by the person you observed. That inference may be one that you made in your earlier paper about the person (Exploration 4). Or it could be a new inference that emerges from your evaluation of all of the details of that paper.

THINKING ABOUT IT: FINDING THE BIG IDEA

In order to find the big idea--one significant enough to make a good topic sentence for a paragraph--you may find one or more of the following strategies helpful.

QUESTION YOUR DETAILS.

To find a topic sentence that goes beyond matters of fact, you should consider some of the unseen characteristics of the person you have observed. Some of

those characteristics could be revealed if you ask yourself what your details can say in answer to the following questions:

1. What are this person's personality traits?
2. What are this person's attitudes toward things, people, or life in general?
3. What is this person's present concern?
4. What is this person's attitude toward his or her present concerns?
5. What are this person's reliability, trustworthiness, and capabilities?
6. What are this person's interests, hobbies, and profession?
7. What is the effect of the person's activity on the person, on others, on the surroundings?

WEED OUT MATTERS OF FACT AND MATTERS OF TASTE

Make sure that your topic sentence contains a key phrase that states a reasoned opinion about the person. When you form a reasoned opinion--particularly when writing about people--you need to ensure that you avoid matters of fact or matters of personal taste. Remember that ***matters of fact*** are ones that can be determined by a brief observation or by reference to an accepted source of information. For example, a statement would be a matter of fact if it were phrased "A dark-haired student in the Math Lab pounds angrily on her calculator." This situation is one that we could probably recognize at first sight. In addition, a statement about the founding date of a college would be considered a matter of fact because we can rely on the college catalog as the source of that information.

Matters of personal taste, on the other hand, are those which differ from person to person and do not normally affect others. For example, my preference for ice cream, science fiction movies, or Monet's paintings are not matters that affect what you like, nor are they likely to have an effect on your life. A statement would be matter of personal taste if it were phrased "A dark-haired student in the Math Lab is acting very obnoxiously." This statement is too personal because it implies that we don't like her because of her behavior. A more reasoned opinion would be one like this: "A dark-haired student in the Math Lab seems so frustrated by her math homework that she would be better off taking a break."

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE 22-1: FACT, TASTE, AND REASONED OPINION

Evaluate each of these proposed topic sentences. Put each of them into a category—matter of fact (***F***), matter of reasoned opinion (***O***), or matter of

personal taste (***T***). Put the correct letter in the blank at the end of each line. The first five sets have one of each kind of statement.

Set 1:

7. A student in the library is working on the homework in his math textbook. _____
8. A student in the library is having difficulty understanding his math problems. _____
9. A student in the library is the most handsome man I've ever seen on this campus. _____

Set 2:

7. A woman in the center of the cafeteria is stunningly attractive. _____
8. A woman in the center of the cafeteria is wearing brightly colored clothing. _____
9. A woman in the center of the cafeteria is aware of how her appearance affects others. _____

Set 3:

7. The gas station attendant puts his customers' satisfaction at the top of his list. _____
8. The gas station attendant is really a nice person. _____
9. The gas station attendant looks rather dirty—his hair, his clothes, and his hands. _____

Set 4:

7. An elderly man at the bus stop looks very charming. _____
8. An elderly man at the bus stop seems very gregarious. _____
9. An elderly man at the bus stop seems to be talking a lot to other people. _____

Set 5:

7. The young woman working in the cafeteria must have had a long night yesterday. _____
8. The young woman working in the cafeteria is moving at a snail's pace. _____
9. The young woman working in the cafeteria is wearing clothes that clash horribly. _____

Set 6:

25. The young probationer has no respect for authority. _____
26. My brother Harry has the most disgusting habits when eating dinner at a restaurant. _____
27. The boy playing on the grass in the park is getting his clothing all grass stained. _____

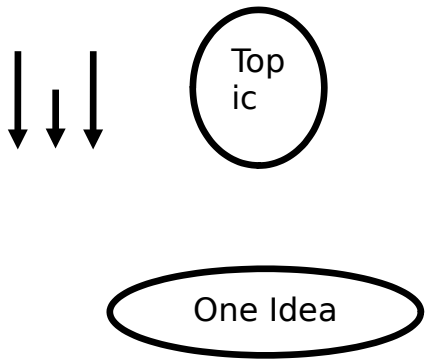
28. A construction worker on the freeway seems oblivious to the dangers around him. _____
29. An Asian woman in the library is flipping through the pages of a newspaper. _____
30. The librarian at the counter has the most impressive head of hair. _____
31. The instructor of English 255 seems very sure of himself. _____
32. One of the tennis players at the college is wearing dazzlingly white tennis togs. _____
33. The checkers at the local Safeway are dressed in western clothing. _____
34. One of the children at the party expects attention from everyone. _____
35. The secretary in the regional director's office appears self-effacing. _____
36. My Uncle George wears the most outlandish clothing when he goes bowling. _____

USE MIND MAPPING TO DRAFT A TOPIC SENTENCE.

The mind mapping technique introduced in Chapter 22 can be put to further use in analyzing our ideas and drawing a conclusion from them.

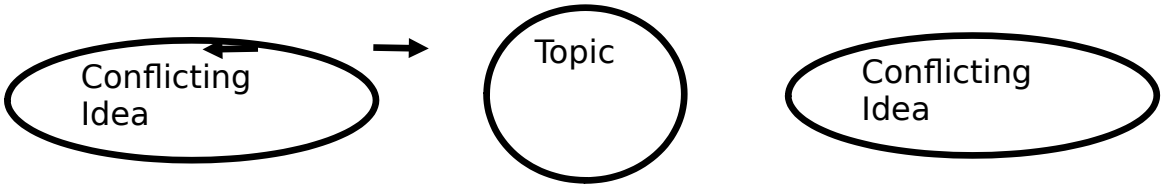
To begin this process, redraw your earlier mind map so that the location of inferences and supporting details tells you something about their relationship with each other. For example, if ideas seem closely related, put them on the same side of the topic circle. If they seem to conflict with each other, put them on opposite sides of the topic circle. If they seem unrelated but not contrasting, put them at right angles to each other. Then use these spatial relationships to clarify conceptual relationships. Here are some ways to interpret spatial relationships on a mind map.

1. The arrows point in the same direction. This indicates that there is a harmony or unity in the ideas that the ideas that you noticed. In this situation you should be able to find a statement that all of your details and ideas supply support.



For example, you may observe a student in the cafeteria who is drinking a large cup of coffee, has rumpled hair and clothes, is unshaven, has red eyes, and is frantically turning pages in a sociology text. These details belong together on one side of the topic circle since they all seem to support the idea that he is really concerned about doing well in sociology because he has been studying most of last night and this morning for a sociology exam.

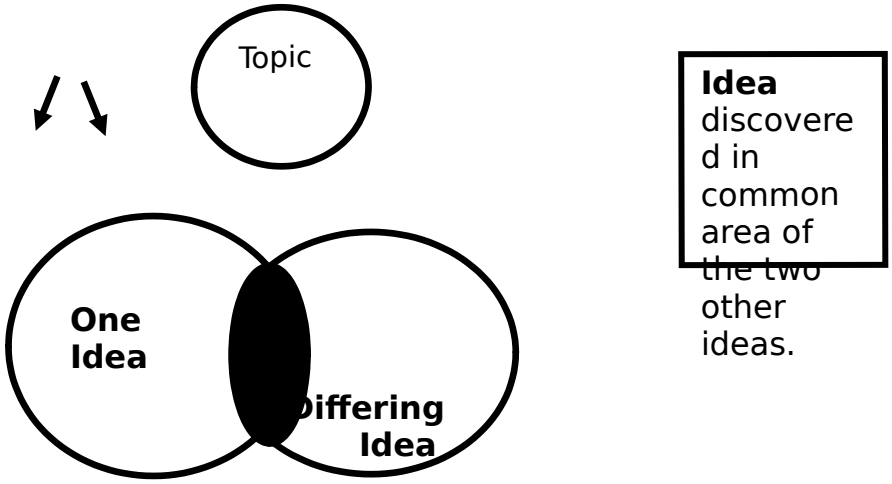
2. On the other hand, the arrows can point away from each other. This indicates that there is a difference, contrast, or contradiction about the ideas you noticed. If the ideas in this situation are about a person, the ideas' contrast may indicate that someone is lying, hypocritical, confused (or lacking in perception), inconsistent (unfair, unaware), ambivalent, changing, or changed.



Take the student in the cafeteria in the preceding example. All the details mentioned there indicated that he was really dedicated to doing well in sociology. They could be placed on one side of the topic circle. But you may have noticed some conflicting details. For example, he may have been looking around whenever someone walked by and later put his head down on his book and dozed for a while. These details could imply that he had lost his ability to focus on his studies because he was too tired. The conflict between these sets of details would probably show some confusion on his part. It could be read as showing that his anxiety about doing well on his sociology exam was so great that it clouded his judgment and caused him to work against success on the exam.

3. In some cases the arrows point off in directions that indicate that the ideas are neither similar nor contrasting. In that case try to look for the

areas that they seem to have in common. The area of the drawing may look very minor, but the idea could be very significant (as illustrated in the diagram on the next page).



Let us go back to the student in the first example again. In that case he was drinking a large cup of coffee, had red eyes, and was frantically turning pages in a sociology text. You might also have noticed that he looked around and made eye contact with everyone who walked by. But in this case, instead of rumple clothes and hair and an unshaven face, he wore clean, pressed clothes and was immaculately groomed. In addition, you note that he chose to study in a place with a great deal of social activity--the cafeteria. These details could imply a strong interest in socializing--in both his everyday activities and in abstract thought (sociology). You might put these two together and conclude that he is preparing for a career in politics. This concept is supported by his present socializing and his study of the behaviors of groups of people (sociology).

WRITE AND EVALUATE SEVERAL POSSIBLE TOPIC SENTENCES.

Although most times we struggle to find a topic sentence, we can benefit from not stopping with one topic sentence. We have a much better chance of writing a good paragraph if we have a choice among several different topic sentences. Having a choice is always an advantage, but making the choice may not be easy. Below are a few suggestions about how to choose among possible topic sentences:

1. Choose the one that more clearly avoids matters of fact and personal taste (as in the earlier exercise).

2. Choose the one that is more limited. Look at the following two examples:

   A young woman at the back table in the Math Lab seems to be angry at her math assignment.

   A young woman at the back table in the Math Lab is becoming so angry at her inability to make her calculator work right that she seems almost ready to throw it in the waste basket.

   The second version is more limited than the first one because it cites a specific reason for her anger (problems with the calculator) and identifies a specific intensity of anger (her readiness to throw it away).

3. Choose the one that is more clearly supported by your details. In gauging the amount of support that your details provide, you need to consider both **how many** details support each topic sentence and **how clearly** they support the topic sentence. Sometimes five or six very strong details can be better than seven or eight weaker ones. Details that provide strong support are both concrete and unmistakably supportive of the topic sentence. For example, look at these two details that could support the same topic sentence about the woman in the Math Lab who is about to toss away her calculator:

   EVALUATE SUPPORTING DETAILS' CONCRETENESS:

   She pounds her finger on the keys on the calculator like an aggressive person poking an opponent's chest in a fierce argument.

   For half a minute she sits motionless and glares at the calculator's answer.

The first sentence has better detail because it provides a more concrete image, thanks in part to a strong comparison. If a set of details like the first one supported one topic sentence and another set like the second detail supported a second topic sentence, the first topic sentence would be the stronger one. On the other hand, the better detail could be the one that has the clearest connection with the topic sentence.

EVALUATE SUPPORTING DETAILS' CONNECTION TO TOPIC SENTENCE:

She picks up the calculator and shakes it as though she were trying to shake some sense into it.

Her face turns red.

Although both of these sentences can provide support for our topic sentence, the first sentence provides stronger support because the detail is more obviously connected to the calculator and the level of her anger. If these two details supported different topic sentences, the details like the first one could make its topic sentence the stronger one.

The discussion of how to choose a topic sentence also provides a lesson on how to choose details after you have chosen the topic sentence. If you have limited space and an abundance of details, choose the ones that are the most concrete and are most clearly connected to the topic sentence.

PARAGRAPH BODY

The body of the paragraph contains all the information--details and explanations of them--that support the topic sentence.

CONCRETE DETAILS

The primary material of the body of the paragraph should be the concrete details that support the topic sentence. The challenge at this point is to keep the details as concrete as they were in our original observation of the person. We are often tempted to generalize--to summarize a series of her actions in a sentence or two. For example, your original paper might have said, "She erases some apparently incorrect formula so vigorously that she tears her paper; then she crumples the whole sheet into a tiny ball and throws it against the wall." You might have mentioned the same behavior several other times. In that case you might be tempted to write, "She would continually erase mistakes until she got so frustrated that she gave up."

Instead, keep the original concrete description and provide additional concrete details of further incidents. Though generalized detail is sometimes necessary even in a paragraph like this one, the paragraph will lack vividness and emotional impact without a large number of concrete details. We can lose this impact because it is sometimes difficult to recognize that we are generalizing about what we observed. Being able to judge the level of generality of statements can help to judge whether our details are as specific and concrete as possible. See the exercise on general and specific statement in Chapter 19.

Also make sure that you omit any details that do not directly add to the support of the idea in the topic sentence. You can use almost any details that support your topic sentence. You may find additional useful details in your rough draft, in your memory of the person, or even in another observation of the same person in a similar situation. Almost any details but invented ones are acceptable.

COMPARISONS AND INFERENCE

A comparison that helps to support your topic sentence will improve the paragraph. If, for example, you want to emphasize how tired a person is, you could say that he walks as slowly and stiffly as a zombie in a horror movie. Again, as with the details, avoid comparisons that are intriguing but that do not support the topic sentence.

This paragraph is based on a major inference about the person you observed. That inference could be quite sound. It could even be very reasonable to your readers. However, often it occurs that each of us brings certain standards of evaluation to our interpretation of some concrete details. For example, if you describe a student in the cafeteria as being perfectly made up--as though she were going out on the town, you might interpret the details of her makeup as a sign of vanity. Others could see the same details as showing a healthy pride in her appearance. You might have to add some explanation to more clearly link your details to your topic sentence's inference. In this case the cafeteria may be one that is used by vocational students who come there after training under dirty conditions, and you recognize the student as one of them. These factors taken together could explain how she stands out from the others and how you interpreted her makeup as a sign of vanity.

USE A CHRONOLOGICAL OR SPATIAL ORGANIZATION.

Because this paragraph stands alone, not as a part of a longer piece of writing, you need to begin by identifying the subject of the paragraph for your readers. You should identify the person in some way, as well as the location, the time of day, and the general activity of the person. If you need an extra sentence for this job, you should put it before the topic sentence.

After the topic sentence, the paragraph will most likely follow a chronological organization. You should recount the details in the same order in which they happened. But you may also want to use a spatial organization. If the person's appearance adds significantly to the support of your topic sentence, that description would normally be put in spatial order--e.g., from the top down. If you include a large number of details of the person's appearance, they would normally follow the topic sentence, before you describe the person's actions. If the details of appearance do not make up a significant part of the paragraph, you can mention them whenever the person draws attention to them. Finally, if a paragraph is long (around 200 words), you may want to end the paragraph with a sentence that refers to the key concept in the topic sentence.

PROVIDE TRANSITIONS.

Providing transitions in a description of a person's appearance and actions is not as challenging as in a description of an object. Readers can usually follow a story told in chronological order and can picture the location of details of a person's appearance. But you still need to make sure that your readers know that you are talking about the same person by using pronouns for the person--*she, her, he, him, his*. And you should provide any signals for time or location that are important for understanding your inferences about the person. Repetition of terms or synonyms can greatly reinforce the main idea of the paragraph. If the topic sentence emphasizes how tired a student is, you may find yourself in need of similar terms, like *weary, exhausted, drowsy,* and *drained*. Finally, this paragraph may present the need to signal that you have another detail that supports the topic sentence just as the preceding one does. In those cases you may want to use transitional words that signal a similarity, words like *in addition, also, too, as well, additionally, moreover, further*, and *furthermore*.

CONCLUSION 2 CHECKLIST

17. PLAN

- **DUE DATE IS _____**
- **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
- **LIMIT THE TOPIC**: Limit the paragraph to ONE ASPECT of the person's PERSONALITY or MOOD, or ONE ASPECT of the person's ACTIVITY.
- **MAIN IDEA [TOPIC SENTENCE]:** Near the beginning of the paragraph, provide a topic sentence that clearly states one important idea about the person.
  - Limit (narrow) the topic and the key concept about the topic.
  - Avoid matters of fact and personal taste.
  - State an opinion that the details clearly support.

18. ORGANIZE

- Begin with an identification of the person, location, time, and general activity.
- State the topic sentence.
- Describe the person's appearance in a spatial order (if it is a significant part of the paragraph).
- Describe the person's action in time order.
- (Optional) End with a reference to the idea of the topic sentence.

19. WRITE—IN THE BODY OF THE PARAGRAPH INCLUDE

- **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Provide concrete details that support the topic sentence.
- **COMPARISONS:** Provide comparisons that support the topic sentence.
- **INFERENCES**:Provide clear explanations of details so that readers can easily see how they support the topic sentence.

20. EVALUATE AND REVISE

- **MAIN IDEA [TOPIC SENTENCE]**
  - Limited
  - Not a matter of fact or personal taste
  - Details clearly support the main idea.
- **ORGANIZATION**
  - Begin with identification person, location time, general activity, and topic sentence.
  - Spatial organization for the person’s appearance and time order for her actions
- **DETAILS, COMPARISONS AND INFERNECES** provide adequate support for the main ideas.
- **TRANSITIONS**

    - Link details in time and location.
    - Use pronouns, repetition, and linking terms to emphasize how each sentence is related to the preceding one and to the idea of the topic sentence.
- **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**
- **SPECIAL ITEMS TO PROOFREAD FOR:_____**

CHAPTER 23: SUPPORTING AND IDEA ABOUT A GROUP OF PEOPLE—DRAWING AND SUPPORTING CONCUSIONS—PROGRESSIVE ORDER

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THE GOAL OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- Compose and support a topic sentence with multiple examples from a series of observations
- Distinguish between more significant statements (matters of reasoned opinion) and less significant statements (matters of fact) about patterns within a series of observations
- Distinguish between vague and specific statements about patterns within a series of observations
- Organize a paragraph in a progressive pattern
- Connect ideas within a paragraph with transitional devices, particularly terms indicating exemplification, addition, similarity, and difference

REASONS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

The subject of this paragraph assignment is the group of people you wrote about in Exploration 5 (or a similar group of people whom you observed for 45 to 60 minutes). This assignment, like previous ones, is similar to some kinds of professional writing. In business situations, a company often depends on market surveys and other specialized statistical techniques to

identify what to sell, to whom to sell it, where to sell it, how to package it, how to advertise it, and how to price it. But employees who make everyday decisions--particularly in small companies--do not have the opportunity to make use of this kind of sophisticated analysis. Many of those decisions are based on an experienced employee's making personal observations, noticing patterns or trends, and making an inference about what the company needs to do to operate more effectively. Decisions of this sort are important when a company is losing or gaining a group of customers. For example, if someone in a company realizes that the company is losing a formerly loyal group of customers--say, those over 65--he or she should ask why. The answer to that question could be the key to the company's success. The same is true if the company is losing or gaining sales in general. If the trend is down, someone needs to ask what has gone wrong and what the company can do to correct it. If the trend is up, someone needs to ask what has gone right so that it can be maintained into the future. Also, when there is a distinct difference in the performance of two or more groups of employees, someone should ask what is causing the superior performance so that overall performance can be improved.

These examples from business may seem limited in their scope. Other examples could be cited from any situation in which people work together in groups--from negotiating international trade agreements to teaching kindergarten. But the application is even broader than that. This assignment is similar to almost any situation in which a person is asking, "What is going on here?" That question is asked a lot. The answer to the question is often very important. If you notice one group of your friends ignoring you, if see your children acting more and more belligerent, if your car runs rough only at certain times, if you see plants in some parts of your garden dying, you ask, "Why?" And the answer is important to you. So the directions for this paper will focus on how to ask and how to answer the question, "What's going on here?"

LIMIT THE TOPIC.

Write a paragraph about the group of people whom you described in the Exploration 5 assignment (Chapter 19) or another group that you have observed for 45 to 60 minutes and have described in detail (600 to 1500 words).

Limit the paragraph to ONE ASPECT of the attitude or activity of the persons in the group. The task at this point is to identify one aspect of the persons' activity that enables us to limit the topic adequately for one paragraph and still say something of significance. To be significant, an idea

has to avoid matters of fact and matters of personal taste, just as in writing about one person (Chapter 22).

TOPIC SENTENCE

Near the beginning of the paragraph, provide a clear topic sentence that states a significant inference about the about the persons that you observed. That inference may be one that you made in your earlier paper about the group (Exploration 5). Or it could be a new inference that emerges from your evaluation of all of the details of that paper.

Make sure that your topic sentence contains a significant opinion about the group of people. It should not be an idea that would be expected. It should also avoid matters of fact and matters of personal taste. For example, a significant opinion could be phrased this way: "Because of the way they are arguing, the students studying at one table in the library seem to take their subject more seriously than politics." It would be a matter of fact to say, "The students studying at one table in the library are loudly arguing." It would be a matter of personal taste to say, "The students studying at one table in the library are being annoying."

THINKING ABOUT IT: FINDING THE BIG IDEA

In order to find the big idea--one significant enough to make a good topic sentence for a paragraph--you may find one or more of the following strategies helpful.

QUESTION YOUR DETAILS.

To find a topic sentence that goes beyond matters of fact, you should consider some characteristics of the group that can be determined only through inferences. Some of those characteristics could be revealed if you ask yourself what your details can say in answer to the following questions:

8. What are the people's personality traits?
9. What are the people's attitudes toward things, people, or life in general?
10. What is the people's present concern?
11. What is the people's attitude toward their present concerns?

12. What are the people's reliability, trustworthiness, and capabilities?
13. What are the people's interests, hobbies, and profession(s)?
14. What is the effect of the people's activity on the persons, on others, on the surroundings?

LOOK FOR SIGNIFICANT SIMILARITIES OR DIFFERENCES.

To find a significant idea about a whole group, you should investigate similarities or differences among the group's members. A significant similarity could give you the idea for a good topic sentence. For example, you may have observed a group of students talking about a chemistry assignment in the cafeteria. Although you note several ideas about them individually, one idea might apply to most of them--for instance, that they are all very passionate about their opinions. This could lead you to a topic sentence like this: "The students at one table in the cafeteria are so fanatical about chemistry that they are arguing with the kind of passion that most people reserve for politics."

AVOID MATTERS OF FACT AND PERSONAL TASTE.

In formulating a significant idea, we need to do more than avoid matters of taste and fact: we need to avoid stating an idea that could be reasonably expected. Take for example, the following idea: "Many of the students in the cafeteria don't seem to attach much importance to their appearance because they are casually dressed." On most college campuses casual dress is the norm, so this statement would be reporting what most readers would expect. If, on the other hand, you might infer that the students at one cafeteria table appear to be preparing to make a business presentation because of their formal dress, attaché cases, yellow legal pads, and serious discussion. Because this situation contrasts with the usual situation, you have an idea worthy of note.

EVALUATE THE PORTION OF THE GROUP THE IDEA APPLIES TO.

An additional consideration that can affect the significance of an idea is the percentage of persons in the group to whom it applies. If you notice that six people scattered around the cafeteria (say about five percent) are formally dressed, the fact may not lead you do a significant inference. If you see the six people all at one table (one hundred percent), that can lead to a significant inference about those at that table. If you see a cafeteria full of

people in formal clothing, that's really significant! In many observations specific percentages are either not possible or not appropriate. Some of the terms that you can use to indicate the percentage of people in a group that your idea applies to are *all, most, many, several, some*, and *a few*. In different situations, you would need *all* to make an observation significant. In other cases just *some* or *a few* may be adequate for a significant comment. For example, noticing that *some* of the students in a class are intently listening to the instructor is not significant. Noticing that *all* of them are may be significant--if you can be sure they are completely enthralled and not just dazed. In another situation noticing that *some* members of a class seem to challenge the instructor's authority can provide a significant inference.

EXAMINE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES WITHIN A GROUP.

So far in talking about observations about people in a group, we have talked about what a certain portion of the people in the group have in common--that is a similarity. But in some situations what they do **not** have in common may be more important. For example, if you attend a professional baseball game, you would expect that, in general, the other spectators were there for the entertainment that the game provides. However, you might notice something quite different from what you expected. You could notice that some fans are so fanatical that they cannot take their eyes off the game or their statistic books. Others might not even seem to know which team is at bat. Here you could infer that some of the spectators don't take the game anywhere near as seriously as others do. The fact that makes this idea significant is that the difference between people is more extreme than one would expect. A further tactic in looking for a significant difference is to try to identify a second aspect of the group's members that corresponds to the people who are at one extreme or the other. For example, you might have noticed that the older baseball fans were the most fanatical and the younger ones were the least interested. Then you could use this idea as your topic sentence. Beware of predictable or stereotypical identifications of those in the group. For example, it would follow stereotypes to say that the men seem much more intent on a baseball game that the women. But if you found a group in which just the opposite were true, you could make the significant observation that the women in one group of fans seem to be more fanatical that the men.

Thus the first strategy in identifying your main idea is to look for a significant similarity or difference--one that would not normally be expected. The second strategy is to connect a certain portion of the group as being distinct in some way from another portion.

You could also adapt the techniques of mind mapping suggested in Chapter 22. In this case instead of using directions to indicate similarities and differences between the ideas about one individual, the technique can be applied to ideas about the members of a group.

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE 23-1: SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS

For each of the following sets of observations, circle the number of the statement which is more significant.

Set 1:
1. A visitor to the campus could tell that it must be lunchtime because most of the students in the cafeteria are eating.
2. A visitor to campus could tell that it must be getting close to finals because most of the students in the cafeteria are intently reading their textbooks.

Set 2:
1. Some of the students at the tables in the library are staring at the paintings on the walls as though they were serious students of art.
2. Some of the students at the tables in the library are staring at their math books as though they are serious students of math.

Set 3:
1. The women on the campus lawns seem more interested in physical sports than the men are.
2. The women on the campus lawns seem more interested in reading than the men are.

Set 4:
1. Some of the students walking from building to building seem less intimidated by the snowstorm than others.
2. Most of the students walking from building to building don't seem to like the snowstorm.

Set 5:
1. Many of the commuters on the bus are intent on reading the newspaper.
2. Most of the commuters on the bus act as though they are in a meeting of a social club.

Set 6:
1. Some of the commuters on the bus act as though they are on a sight seeing trip.
2. Some of the commuters on the bus seem more bored by their trip than others.

Set 7:

1. Most of the women in the computer lab seem comfortable writing computer programs.
2. The women in the computer lab seem more comfortable writing computer programs than the men do.

WRITE AND EVALUATE SEVERAL POSSIBLE TOPIC SENTENCES: VAGUE AND SPECIFIC TOPIC SENTENCES.

Many common words often quickly come to mind when we are trying to identify a similarity or difference among the members of a group. Not surprisingly, most of those words are synonyms for *similarity* and *difference*. But we usually want to avoid these words in our statement of the topic sentence because these words encourage us to make the phrasing vague. Since we want our topic sentences to be as specific and focused as possible, we should avoid these terms and their synonyms. Look, for example, at the following two sentences

> Many of the commuters on the bus treat their bus ride in a similar fashion.
>
> Many of the commuters on the bus act as though they are on a pleasure trip.

The first phrasing may be the way we first become aware of a significant opinion about the group of people. But it is not as clearly focused as the second sentence. The problem is that as soon as we use *similarity, difference*, or one of their synonyms, the word allows us to finish the sentence without defining what the similarity of difference is. Although both we and our readers know the general strategy that we used in identifying our idea, our readers, at least, will not know what the specific idea is. Here are some terms to avoid in a topic sentence because they indicate a similarity or difference.

TERMS TO AVOID IN TOPIC SENTENCES			
DIFFERENCE		**SIMILARITY**	
contrasting	mixed	alike	identical
disparate	novel	analogous	indistinguishable
dissimilar	own (as in “their own”)	common	like
distinct	personal	comparable	matching
distinctive	special	corresponding	one (as in “one attitude”)
divergent	uncommon	equal	same
diverse	unique	equivalent	
exceptional	unlike		
incompatible	unusual		
individual			

various	

The alternative to using these terms is to use phrasing like that in the sentences of the previous paragraph exercise. The following exercise gives some additional practice at spotting this problem.

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE 23-2: VAGUE AND SPECIFIC TOPIC SENTENCES

For each of the following sets of topic sentences, circle the number of the more specific topic sentence. Underline the synonym for *similar* or *different* in the less specific sentence.

Set 1:
1. Most of the students in the cafeteria have identical attitudes toward the food.
2. Most of the students in the cafeteria seem to relish the cafeteria's fare.

Set 2:
1. Each of the students responded to the news of the exam in his or her own way.
2. Most of the students responded to the news of the exam more positively than the rest.

Set 3:
1. The men responded more intensely to the campus newspaper's story on dating than the women did.
2. The men seem to respond to the campus newspaper's story on dating in a way that is quite distinct from the women's response.

Set 4:
1. Many of the students in the student union seem to be taking the threat of a hurricane rather casually.
2. Most of the students in the student union have comparable attitudes toward the threat of a hurricane.

Set 5:
1. The opinion of the older bus riders toward the scenery seems to contrast with that of the younger riders.
2. The older bus riders seem to take more interest in the passing scenery than the younger ones do.

Set 6:
1. Many of the students in the computer lab have equivalent feelings about the lab staff.
2. Many of the students in the computer lab treat the lab staff as lifesavers on the beach.

Set 7:
1. The students in the cafeteria face the end of the term with various views.
2. Some of the students face the end of the term with much more relief than others.

PARAGRAPH BODY

The body of the paragraph contains all the information--details and explanations of them--that support the topic sentence.

At this point we need to address the issue of which details belong in the body of the paragraph. If we are basing this paragraph on 600 or more words about 6 or more people, how do we decide which individuals to include in the paragraph and which details about each person to include? Deciding can be a painful problem because we may have many compelling details to include and only 100 to 200 words with which to express them.

Let's take first the question of how many individuals to include. Since our topic sentence talks about the group in general, one person would not make a convincing representation of the whole group. So we need at least two examples of people to represent the group. At the opposite extreme, we cannot usually describe more that about six individuals in one paragraph without the paragraph becoming too long. So, within the range of two to six, what's the right number? Four considerations can help us arrive at the right number.

- If you make a statement about *all* or *most* of the members of a group, two examples probably would not do. You should try to think in terms of the upper range of about six individuals. On the other hand, a comment about *some or a few* of the group members could be adequately illustrated with details about only two or three persons.

- Determine how much information is required to adequately set out the details about each person. If your topic sentence emphasizes that students were really disappointed by the opinions of a speaker who visited the campus, you may have to provide many details about each student. You would include details about each student's

behavior--for example, words, tone of voice, and actions. You might also need to add further details and inferences to establish that the opinions of the speaker caused the disappointment rather than some other aspect of the experience. If you have to provide many details to make each person a convincing illustration, think of using only two or three persons in the paragraph. If you need only a few details for each person, there could be room for five or six examples in a paragraph. Generally, the more examples, the more convincing the paragraph.

- Eliminate the members of the group who contradict your topic sentence or make poor illustrations of it. When we eliminate the contradictory examples, we are not being dishonest--unless we claim that the topic sentence applies to *all* members of the group. An experienced reader will recognize that evidence that does not support an opinion usually does not appear in a defense of that opinion.

- Gauge how many details you have available for each person. The fewer details you have available for each person, the more people you can include in the paragraph. But remember that the more details you provide about each person, the better an example the person makes.

CONCRETE DETAILS, COMPARISONS, AND INFERENCE

As in paragraphs about more limited subjects, this paragraph will sound more convincing if it is rich in concrete details. We should include as many relevant details as possible about each individual included in the paragraph. The availability of concrete details is one of the major criteria for an individual's being included in the paragraph. Also, comparisons can liven up the description of an individual and reduce the number of words we need to describe an individual. The paragraph may benefit from inferences that we included in the earlier paper on this subject or from new ones crafted just for this paragraph. We need to recognize that our interpretations of a person's actions may depend on our automatic, unspoken inferences. We should state those inferences for our readers in order to make the person stand convincingly as an illustration of our topic sentence's idea.

USE PROGRESSIVE ORDER FOR ORGANIZATION.

Because this paragraph stands alone, not as a part of a longer piece of writing, you need to begin by identifying the subject of the paragraph for your readers: location, the time, the group of people, and their general activity. If you need an extra sentence for this job, put it before the topic sentence.

After the topic sentence, the paragraph should follow one of two patterns, depending upon whether the topic sentence focuses on a similarity or a difference. First, a paragraph based on a similarity can use a simple progressive order. This organizational method works best if we start with our best illustration first and then go on to the second best, third best, and so on. This order is effective because putting the best example first usually enables us to keep our readers' interest. If our best example doesn't interest our readers, the lesser illustrations won't do so either. The judgment about which is the better illustration may be based on how many details we have about each person or on how concrete the details about each person are. Most often, however, we will put the person first who is the most extreme illustration of our idea. If, for example, you want to illustrate how fanatical some women are about a baseball game, you should begin with the most fanatical spectator and then go on to the lesser fanatics. The following outline shows how the paragraph can be organized:

Introductory sentence (if necessary)
TOPIC SENTENCE:
1. Best example
2. Second best example
3. Third best example
4. Other examples (as necessary)

Concluding sentence (optional)

If, on the other hand, if the paragraph is based on a difference between two portions of the larger group, another organization has priority over the progressive order. If we want to emphasize a difference, the easiest way to do so is to divide the paragraph into two parts--one dealing with each of the two contrasting portions of the group. For example, if you divided your group at a baseball game into the fanatical and the uninterested spectators, cover all of the uninterested ones before you go on to the fanatics. This method of organization emphasizes the character of each group and thus demonstrates most clearly the contrast stated by the topic sentence. Then, within each of the two parts of the paragraph, the illustrations can be

organized by progressive order. Within the section on baseball fanatics, put the most fanatic first. Within the group of uninterested spectators, put the most uninterested first. The following outline shows how this kind of paragraph can be organized:

Introductory sentence (if necessary)
TOPIC SENTENCE:
Transition the first portion of the group
1. Best example of the first portion of the of the group
2. Second best example of the first portion of the of the group
3. Other examples (as necessary)

Transition to the second portion of the group
1. Best example of the second portion of the of the group
2. Second best example of the second portion of the of the group
3. Other examples (as necessary)

Concluding sentence (optional)

PROVIDE TRANSITIONS.

In a paragraph like the one described in this chapter there are a number of different kinds of relationships that a writer could need to signal for the readers.

SIGNALING MORE ON THE SAME TOPIC

In a paragraph about a number of people, we can use many of the same transitions as we would in a paragraph about just one individual. When we want to signal to readers that we are talking about the same person, we use the pronouns *she, her, he, him, his*. When we want to signal that one event follows another, time indicators can help. If we want to link details about an individual to the topic sentence, we can use terms that are clearly related to the key concept of the topic sentence. Finally, when a paragraph moves on to a new individual who supports the topic sentence very much as the preceding one does, we need transitions like *in addition*, *also, too, as well, additionally, moreover, further*, and *furthermore*. We also have the option of beginning sentences with *first, second, third,* . . . , and *finally*.

SIGNALING AN ILLUSTRATION

A paragraph about a group of people, particularly one organized in a progressive order, also needs a new class of transitional terms. After the paragraph's topic sentence states an opinion about the whole group, the paragraph moves on to describe one of the individuals in the group as evidence for the topic sentence. When a reader jumps from the topic sentence (about the group) to the next sentence (about an individual) the connection between the two may not be clear. For just this situation, we have two standard transitions--*for instance* and *for example*. When readers see one of these phrases, they know immediately that the following item will illustrate the preceding idea. We also have choices of many other transitional phrases or even sentences. These transitions are more dependent on the specific context and are usually longer, but they do have their advantages. For example, if your topic sentence talks about fanatic baseball spectators, you could begin the next sentence with the phrase, "Of all these fans the most fanatic, a woman in Brewers' coat, shouts. . . ." This phrasing clearly connects this one fan with the idea about the group of fans, and it helps the reader follow the organization by indicating a progressive order with the phrase "most fanatic."

SIGNALING A CONTRAST

A paragraph that is based upon a contrast between two portions of a group needs an additional kind of transition. If we write such a paragraph, we can make the sentences run smoothly through the first part of the paragraph. But as soon as we get to the second part, which talks about the contrasting portion, we can create a huge logical gap for our readers. In the earlier illustration about the baseball fans, the topic sentence could say that the men seem less interested in the game than the women. The following sentences can give several sentences of examples of uninterested men. Then, when the paragraph introduces the fanatical female fans, the whole paragraph seems to change direction. To avoid losing readers in a situation like this, you should link this part of the paragraph to both the topic sentence and to the preceding examples of uninterested males. To make these connections you need to mention the key concept of the topic sentence and show a contrast between the first and second parts of the paragraph. Here is one example: "In contrast to the men, the women seem much more enthusiastic about the game." The first part, "in contrast," shows that this part of the paragraph is, indeed, quite different from the preceding section. The use of the term "enthusiastic" reminds the reader of the topic sentence's idea about fans' interest in the game. The second part of a transitional sentence like this one depends completely on the topic of the paragraph. But we have a list of standard transitions to do the first job

of showing contrast: *in contrast, however, on the other hand,* and *nevertheless.* Not every one of these terms will work in every paragraph, so pick one that makes sense and reads smoothly in your paragraph.

CONCLUSION 3 CHECKLIST

21. PLAN

- **DUE DATE IS _____**
- **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
- **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the paragraph to ONE ASPECT of the attitude or activity of the persons in the group.
- **TOPIC SENTENCE:** Near the beginning of the paragraph, provide a topic sentence that states a significant idea ABOUT THE GROUP OF PEOPLE.
  - Limit (narrow) the topic and the key concept about the topic.
  - Avoid matters of fact and personal taste.
  - State an opinion that the details clearly support.
  - Avoid vagueness (particularly unclear phrasing caused by synonyms for *similar* or *different*).

22. ORGANIZE

- Begin with an identification of the group, location, time, and general activity.
- State the topic sentence.
- Use progressive order to organize examples (best example first).
- If the paragraph is based on a contrast, finish one section of examples before moving on to the contrasting section.
- (Optional) End with a reference to the idea of the topic sentence

23. WRITE—IN THE BODY OF THE PARAGRAPH INCLUDE

- **EXAMPLES:** Include two and six people as examples of the topic sentence.
- **CONCRETE DETAILS:** Provide concrete details that support the topic sentence.
- **COMPARISONS:** Provide comparisons that support the topic sentence.
- **INFERENCES**: Provide clear explanations of details so that readers can easily see how they support the topic sentence.

24. EVALUATE AND REVISE

- **MAIN IDEA [TOPIC SENTENCE]**
  - Limited, not a matter of fact or personal taste
  - Details clearly support the main idea.

- Topic sentence avoids vagueness.

- **ORGANIZATION**
  - Begin with an identification of the group, location, time, and general activity and topic sentence.
  - Use progressive (and contrast) organization for examples.
- **DETAILS, COMPARISONS AND INFERNECES** provide adequate support for the main ideas.
- **TRANSITIONS**
  - Use *for example*, *for instance* or other transitional phrases to connect the first person to the topic sentence's idea.
  - Use repetition of the same or similar words to link each example to the key concept of the topic sentence.
  - Use pronouns to signal that you are talking about the same person.
  - Use transitional terms like in addition to link an example to a similar one.
  - Use transitional terms like in contrast to link a section with a contrasting one.
  - In the second part of a paragraph based on contrast, you may need to use for example, for instance or other transitional phrases to connect the first person to the topic sentence's idea.
- **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**
- **SPECIAL ITEMS TO PROOFREAD FOR:_____**

CHAPTER 24: FROM PARAGRAPH TO THEME

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THE GOAL OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- See the parallels between main ideas in paragraphs and longer papers (themes)
- Distinguish between topic sentence and thesis
- Organize longer papers by classification, time, and progressive orders
- Use an effective method of creating outlines
- Write introductions and conclusions for longer papers

REASONS FOR THIS CHAPTER

Up to now we have focused on the basic characteristic of paragraph. That characteristic is that each paragraph needs a main idea or topic sentence which the other sentences of the paragraph support. For example, the other sentences provide details, examples, history, reasons, comparisons, contrasts, divisions, or definitions that help readers understand and accept the paragraph's main idea. This basic characteristic of paragraphs, also applies to longer papers which are called *essays* or *themes*. For simplicity we will refer to all longer pieces of writing which embody the basic principle of main idea and support as ***themes***. The following chart shows the parallels between paragraphs and themes. Notice how the **main idea** (either a **topic sentence** or a **thesis sentence**) stands as a key feature of both pieces of writing.

PAPER	PARAGRAPH	THEME

ELEMENT		
Main idea	**Topic sentence**	**Thesis sentence**
Supporting elements	Sentences or groups of sentences	Paragraphs or groups of paragraphs
Beginning	Sometimes a short introduction **and topic sentence**	Introduction, which includes a link to the readers' interests, the **thesis sentence**, and link to paragraphs of the theme's body
End	Sometimes a concluding sentence that recalls the **topic sentence**	Conclusion, which includes a summary, restatement of the **thesis sentence**, and link to readers' interests
Transitions	Links between sentences and between sentences and the **topic sentence**	Links between paragraphs and between paragraphs and the **thesis sentence**

You can also compare the elements of the paragraph and the theme by the parallels between the paragraph outline in the previous chapter with a theme out line on the same topic:

PARAGRAPH	THEME
Introductory sentence (if necessary) and a **TOPIC SENTENCE** Transition the first portion of the group 4. Best example of the first portion of the of the group 5. Second best example of the first portion of the of the group 6. Other examples (as necessary) Transition to the second portion of the group 4. Best example of the second portion of the of the group 5. Second best example of the second portion of the of the group 6. Other examples (as necessary) Concluding sentence (optional)	INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH which includes the **THESIS** PARAGRAPH ONE OF THE BODY OF THE PAPER, which includes a **TOPIC SENTENCE** FOR THIS PARAGRAPH 1. Best example, 2. Second best example 3. Other examples (as necessary) PARAGRAPH TWO OF THE BODY OF THE PAPER, which includes a **TOPIC SENTENCE** FOR THIS PARAGRAPH 1. Best example, 2. Second best example 3. Other examples (as necessary) CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH, which includes a restatement of the **THESIS**.

Notice in the diagram that all the same ideas can be contained within the structure and that all the ideas and supporting details maintain the same relationships with each other. The only difference is that the theme is longer and contains multiple paragraphs and more detailed examples, all of which still support the main idea.

THEME FORMAT

Throughout much of the history of English composition courses, there have been instructors who have taught the format of the “five paragraph theme.” This format is useful in understanding what a theme needs to accomplish, but it is not the only way in which themes can be written. The danger of emphasizing this format is that it can lead to oversimplified and shallow thinking about the topics of writing. The advantage, though, is that it does lead a clear understanding of the relationships between the parts of a theme. With these warnings about the format, let us look at the traditional theme format or “template” on the next page. Notice that the footnotes on that page identify the purpose of each of the elements of the template. Also be sure when you write your own themes, that you do not follow the wording of the pattern too closely and do not include the headings like “INTRODUCTION” in the theme itself.

THEME TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION:

Although the very important subject **X** is generally well known for its **Y**, people seldom know much about its other aspects.[1] One fact that sharply contrasts with the image of **X** as a case of **Y** is the fact that **Z**.[2] However, there is abundant evidence of **Z**. The main sources of that evidence are **1, 2, and 3.**[3]

BODY:

Perhaps the most obvious source of evidence for **Z** is the fact that **1**, which shows up in many striking details**.**[4] **1**. First of all, **1** is seen in the **A** that is ever present.[5] Second, it [**1**] shows up in **B**. [6] Finally, **1** is observed in **C**.[7]

[8]The second most obvious source of evidence for **Z** is the fact that **2**, which shows up in many striking details. First of all, **2** is seen in the **A** that is ever present. Second, it [**2**] shows up in **B**. Finally, **2** is observed in **C**.

A third clear source of evidence for **Z** is the fact that **3**, which shows up in many striking details. First of all, **3** is seen in the **A** that is ever present. Second, it [**3**] shows up in **B**. Finally, **3** is observed in **C**.

CONCLUSION:

[1] This section links the topic of the paper to the interests of the readers.
[2] This is the thesis statement.
[3] This is a statement of method, a section that tells readers what to expect in support of the thesis.
[4] This is the first topic sentence of the body. It provides a link to the thesis and to the paragraphs details.
[5] This is the first supporting idea of the paragraph. It is linked to the topic sentence, and it may be supported in turn by additional detailed or illustrating sentences.
[6] Second supporting idea of the paragraph.
[7] Third supporting idea of the paragraph.
[8] The second and third paragraphs of the body follow patterns that are similar to those in the first paragraph one.

The obvious evidence from **1** receives corroboration from both **2** and **3**.[9] Thus the truth of **Z** appears quite certain.[10] Therefore, those who know **X** well will see it not simply as a case of **Y** but also as a case of **Z**.[11] This fact may complicate their thinking about **X**, but it will also prevent them from making the unfortunate mistake of taking it simply as a case of **Y**.[12]

[9] This is a summary of main points. It connects the main points to the thesis and to each other.
[10] This states the degree of support that the body supplies for the thesis.
[11] This is another statement of the thesis—usually a more complete, nuanced, or emphatic statement than in the introduction.
[12] This section links the last statement of the thesis to the interests of the readers.

ORGANIZATIONAL METHODS FOR PAPERS AND PARAGRAPHS

Paragraphs and papers can be organized according to a variety of methods. So far this book has explained spatial, time, progressive, and contrast as methods of organization. Two other important methods are classification (a method that is very frequently used in themes) and comparison (a method that is very similar to contrast). A final method is a causal analysis pattern, which is more rarely used.

All of the previously mentioned methods of organization can useful for organizing both paragraphs and complete papers. These methods are illustrated in the five following examples of outlines. These outlines do not include sections for the introduction and conclusion because those parts of the paper are often difficult to plan during the stages in which a writer is organizing the body of the paper. Usually those sections of the paper can be more easily crafted after at least one draft of the body of the paper has been completed. Each outline provides a section entitled "Statement of Purpose," which provides an explanation of the purpose for the paper that is outlined. Each outline also provides a brief explanation of the method of organization.

METHOD OF ORGANIZATION: TIME (& CLASSIFICATION)*

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:
READER: Instructor of History 264 (17th grade reading level, good knowledge of the history of the Key Peninsula, professional interest)
OBJECTIVES: To inform and persuade
THESIS: Within a relatively short time after the resources of the Key Peninsula were recognized, they were exploited by white settlers.

OUTLINE:

I. The early explorers provided a general inventory of the peninsula's resources.
   A. Peter Puget's inventory was the first rough one (1792).
   B. Hudson's Bay employees explored the peninsula from Ft. Nisqually beginning about 1835.
   C. The Wilkes Expedition provided the first American report on the peninsula's resources in 1841.

II. The early settlers were quick to exploit the resources of the peninsula (1850-1900).
   D. Farming began as early as 1852 in Vaughn and 1858 in Longbranch.
   E. Logging had begun around Home by 1870.
   F. Fishing and gathering shellfish became part-time occupations of some residents by 1875.
   G. Bricks were made from local materials by 1880 in Lakebay.

H. The tourist trade (vacation lots at Longbranch and hotels at Delano Beach and Glen Cove) began about 1890.

III. Since 1900 only a few new resources have been tapped on the peninsula.
   A. Expansions of logging (1890-1920), farming (1890-1930), and the tourist trade (1890-present) were the largest changes during the period.
   B. Huckleberry foliage (used in floral decorations) became an important product of the peninsula after 1935.
   C. Commercial geoduck dredging is the most recent new operation (since 1960.)

**A paper organized according to time must have its points listed in chronological order. If there are no clear chronological breaks between groups of points, some sort of classification can be used to divide the points into groups. (In the above example, the list of events is grouped according to types and levels of activities.)*

METHOD OF ORGANIZATION: SPACE (& CLASSIFICATION)*

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:
READERS: Readers of the *TNT* "Go" section (11th grade reading level, a very general knowledge of the state's resources and of the Key Peninsula, personal interest)
OBJECTIVE: To inform
THESIS: A drive through the Key Peninsula can provide your family an education in the natural resources of Western Washington.

OUTLINE:

I. The north end of the peninsula illustrates the salt water's resources.
   A. The fish hatchery at Minter provides for the continued salmon runs.
   B. The Minterbrook Oyster Company raises and harvests Pacific Oysters.

II. The central part of the peninsula illustrates the land's resources.
   A. Near the Shelton cutoff dense huckleberry, salal, and Oregon grape provide greenery for florists.
   B. Areas north of Key Center show the signs of being logged within the last five years.
   C. Small farms flank the road between Key Center and Home.

III. The southern end of the Key Peninsula illustrates recreational opportunities.
   A. Bay Lake and Lakebay provide opportunities for boaters and fishermen.
   B. Penrose Point State Park provides opportunities for campers, picnickers, and clam diggers.
   C. Longbranch has an excellent view for sightseers and a marina for boaters.

**A paper which is organized according to space should have its points ordered according to some consistent motion through space. That motion can be geographical (as in the above example), directional (up, down, right, left, forward, etc.), circular, or some reasonable combination of motions. If there are not clear spatial breaks between groups of points, some sort of classification can be used to divide up the points into groups. (In the above example, the list of resources is divided according to the source and use of the resources.)*

METHOD OF ORGANIZATION: CLASSIFICATION*/PROGRESSIVE ORDER**

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:
READERS: Students in a Geography 200 class (12th grade reading level, little knowledge of the Key Peninsula and a fair knowledge of the principles of geography, professional interest)
OBJECTIVE: To inform
THESIS: The natural resources of the Key Peninsula provide most of the jobs for those who live and work on the peninsula.

OUTLINE:

I. Because of the area's natural beauty, the recreational industry provides the largest number of jobs.
   A. Many residents' jobs are completely dependent upon the recreation industry (public and private park management and maintenance, marinas, summer camps, etc.).
   B. Most other residents' jobs are partly dependent upon the recreation industry. (restaurants, service stations, real estate sales, general merchandising and services)

II. Renewable (living) resources provide the second largest number of jobs.
   A. The forests' resources provide many jobs for loggers and brush pickers.
   B. The fields' resources provide jobs for small scale farmers and Christmas tree farmers.
   C. The salt water's resources provide jobs for some residents in fishing, fish culture, and shellfish culture and collection.

III. Merchandising provides the third largest number of jobs.
   A. Grocery stores provide the largest number of jobs in this category.
   B. Restaurants provide the second largest number of jobs in this category.
   C. Other merchandising also provides a significant number of jobs.

IV. Other occupations, especially in private and public services, provide the fourth largest numbers of jobs.
   A. Private services include those provided by construction contractors, utilities, mechanics, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, etc.
   B. The public services include those provided by the school district and by county, state, and federal governments.

**A paper organized by classification is able to discuss a large number of items by putting them into groups each of which is clearly defined by a specific common element. The common element could be defined according to standard categories (as the standard categories of economic activities in the above example) or according to some characteristic which you have observed. You should make the categories as distinct from each other as possible. (This method of organization will also require a second method—a method of ordering the groups—e.g., progressive, time, or space.)*

***a paper organized by progressive order has its main points listed in an order from **most** _____ to **least** _____ or from **least** _____ to **most** _____. It could be order of size (as in the above example), order of importance, order of cost, order of generality, order of greenness, etc.*

METHOD OF ORGANIZATION: CONTRAST (OR COMPARISON)*

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

READERS: Readers of *Peninsula Gateway* (10th grade reading level, good knowledge of the present Key Peninsula and a fair knowledge of the history of the Key Peninsula, curiosity interest)
OBJECTIVE: To inform and entertain
THESIS: One hundred years ago the residents of the Key Peninsula were much more isolated from rest of the Puget Sound region than they are today.

OUTLINE:

I. One hundred years ago the system of roads which now connect the Key Peninsula with the cities of the Puget Sound area did not exist.
   A. Today all the peninsula communities have quick and convenient access to Gig Harbor, Bremerton, Tacoma, and Seattle.
   B. One hundred years ago most connections between the Peninsula and the cities of the region depended on the regular but rather slow steam ship that plied Puget Sound.

II. One hundred years ago many fewer residents of the peninsula regularly traveled to the cities of the region.
   A. Today many peninsula residents hold professional positions or specialized jobs that take them to the cities regularly.
   B. One hundred years ago only a few residents (fishermen, steamer crews, and some merchants) made regular trips to the cities.

III. One hundred years ago residents of the peninsula much less frequently came into contact with visitors to the peninsula.
   A. Today most of those who live and work on the peninsula work at jobs that bring them into contact with those who visit the peninsula, (e.g., they work in the recreation industry and merchandising).
   B. One hundred years ago, because most residents worked with other residents, the appearance of an outsider was a special event.

**A paper organized by comparison (similarities) or contrast (differences) can deal with two subjects in one of two ways, a point-by-point or parallel point pattern. Two simplified examples are listed below.*

POINT-BY-POINT (usually clearer)	PARALLEL POINT (useful in some cases)
Thesis: Ford is cheaper than Chevrolet.	Thesis: Ford is cheaper than Chevrolet.
I. Purchase price	I. Ford
A. Ford	A. Purchase price
B. Chevrolet	B. Operating costs
II. Operating costs	C. Repair costs
A. Ford	II. Chevrolet
B. Chevrolet	A. Purchase price
	B. Operating costs

III. Repair costs A. Ford B. Chevrolet	C. Repair costs

METHOD OF ORGANIZATION: CAUSAL ANALYSIS*/PROGRESSIVE ORDER

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
READERS: Instructor of a Geography 100 class (17th grade reading level, fair knowledge of the Key Peninsula and very good knowledge of principles of geography, professional interest)
OBJECTIVE: To inform and persuade
THESIS: Within the last one hundred years the creation of a system of roads on the Key Peninsula has increased the transferability of goods and services and made the peninsula an integral part of the Puget Sound economic region.

OUTLINE:

I. The system of roads has brought the Key Peninsula much closer to the rest of the Puget Sound economic region.
   A. One hundred years ago, when costly and time-consuming steamers were the main means of transportation, the Key Peninsula was relatively isolated from the rest of the region.
   B. Today, since cheaper and quicker auto traffic is the main means of transportation, there is greater interdependence between the Key Peninsula and the rest of the region.

II. A contrast between today's auto and ship transportation shows how significant the increased transferability is.
   A. The cost of transporting goods between Puget Sound points by ship is roughly twice the cost of truck transportation.
   B. The speed and convenience of auto traffic makes it preferable to ship traffic for personal transportation.

III. Other factors are contributing causes, but are not as significant as the change in transferability.
   A. Although complementarity (differing resources and needs within the region) has increased in the last sixty years, it would have had a minor effect without the creation of the system of roads.
   B. Although intervening opportunity (proximity to sources of supply) was necessary to drawn the Key Peninsula into the Puget Sound region, this factor has not changed within the last o ne hundred years.

**A paper which is organized according to a causal analysis pattern should have its main points determined by the answers to three questions. The phrasing of the questions varies depending on whether they are asked about the future or about the past and present.*

THE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE ARE THESE:
1. Will the cause be sufficient to produce the desired effect?
2. Would another more desirable cause produce the same effect?
3. Will the cause produce other undesirable effects?

THE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PAST AND PRESENT ARE THESE:

1. Was (or is) the cause sufficient to produce the actual effect? 2. Would another more likely cause produce (have produced) the same effect? 3. Is there evidence (independent of the actual effect) to prove the cause's existence?

USE AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF CREATING AN OUTLINE

Although the papers in the following chapters do not provide challenges in creating basic patterns of organization, knowing a method of organizing an outline can be helpful. The three basic steps for creating an outline are these:

1. list all possible ideas, details, and examples;
2. group the possible items according to some method of classification;
3. then put the groups and the items within groups into reasonable order.

1. LIST ALL POSSIBLE IDEAS, DETAILS, AND EXAMPLES.

This is a brainstorming step. You should not be concerned with the order or the suitability of any of the ideas you record. The only rule is that you should put each item you list on a separate line. Write down all the possible ideas that the paper could cover. Add any examples of those ideas that you can think of. Also add any details that could support any of the idea. Again —order is not important.

2. GROUP THE POSSIBLE ITEMS ACCORDING TO CLASSIFICATION.

The second step actually involves two parts. The more important part is the actual grouping of items. But the second part, which can be almost as important, is eliminating the items that do not fit in the paper. Sometimes we have to recognize that some of our ideas are not closely enough related to belong in the same paper.

There are two methods of classifying the items. One is a mechanical one that can be done on physical pieces of paper. The other is a computerized version that can be done with a word processor. If you like the old-fashioned mechanical way, you need to cut up your paper into separate strips of paper—with just on item on each piece of paper. Then you pile the paper strips into a pile and read through the whole pile once. The last part

of this process is to look for common characteristics in the items you read. For example, if you are writing about restaurants, you might find that you can group ideas and details about restaurants according to their locations—urban, suburban, small town, rural, and interstate rest stop. On the other hand, it is also possible to group these items according to ethnic varieties of restaurants, according to the cost of the restaurant, or according to their style of serving. Consider which method of grouping would be most useful for clarifying your thesis. For example, if your thesis has to do with the mindsets of those who open their own restaurants, perhaps a grouping by ethnic types of food could be useful because of the differences in cultural mindsets.

The more technological version of this sort is to use the word processing program to sort your items. After reading the items on the screen, you can go through them a second time and put numbers in front of each item to indicate which category it could belong to. At this point the numbers don't have any significance; the first group you notice is ***1***, the second one is ***2***, etc. After you have all the items numbered, use the word processor's sort function to put all the ***1***s in one section, the ***2***s in the second section, etc.

Regardless which system you use up to this point, the last step is to limit the number of groups you have. You will probably notice several items or groups of items that don't seem to belong. Either they don't have enough in common with anything else to belong in the same paper, or they are such small or insignificant groups that they wouldn't merit inclusion in the paper. After eliminating these less important items, you should have somewhere between two and five groups. If you end up with more than five, look for some characteristics that two or more groups have in common so that you can put them into one larger group. The goal here is to have between two and five groups, but the idea number will be closer to three than to five.

3. ORDER THE GROUPS AND THE ITEMS IN THE GROUPS.

The last step in the process is to put the groups in order and to put the items within the groups in order. This is the portion of the process in which the specific methods of organization—specifically spatial order, time order, progressive order, and comparison and contrast orders—are the most useful.

First of all, check to see which order of groups would be most useful for making your thesis clear. For example, if your thesis has to do with the mindsets of those who open their own restaurants and you have grouped items by ethnic types of food, consider using a spatial order of the groups. You could organize the groups by the regions of the world from which those foods come or by the regions of the US in which those foods are popular.

This method of organization can make some sense because those from or living in one area could have similar mindsets.

Second, put the items in each group into an order that helps you explain each section of your paper most effectively. The method you choose here may be the same as you used to order the groups themselves. Or it could be a completely different one. For instance, in the example mentioned in the previous paragraphs it could make sense to order the details in a progressive order. Each section could order the elements of restaurateurs' mindsets from the most important element to the least important.

PRINCIPLES FOR FORMATTING OUTLINES

Once you have a rough idea of how a paper is going to organized, it helps to be able to put the standard pattern that experienced writers use. The standard pattern is useful in evaluating our own organization and in asking others' help in evaluating our organization. Here are the principles of the standard pattern of outlining:

1. **Use <u>compete sentences</u> in all headings or combination of headings [unless you are writing an outline for you own use and you are quite familiar with the topic].**

I. The English language developed when A. the Anglo-Saxons created its basis B. the Norwegians and Danes added their words C. the Normans added French words	The three subheadings (**A-C**) are just three parts of the sentence that begin in the major heading (**I**). This combination of headings can work well in some outlines.

2. **Make the outline work for you to understand the <u>relationships between ideas</u>.** Each idea should support the one above. For example, each **A**, **B**, and **C** heading in an outline needs to be a support for the heading above it (**I**, **II**, or **III**). Support means that each idea provides details, examples, history, reasons, comparisons, contrasts, divisions, or definitions for the main idea. In the previous example **A**, **B**, and **C** all provide details about how the language developed (the idea of **I**).

3. **Each time you have <u>one supporting idea</u>, there should be a <u>second one</u>.** If there is no second one, combine the main heading and the supporting one. For example,

I. Major roots of English are in several countries. A. Germany, Norway, Denmark, and France are the sources.	**Should be ➔**	I. Major roots of English are in Germany, Norway, Denmark, and France. ***OR*** I. Major roots of English are in three counties. A. The first source is Germany. B. The second is Norway. C. The third is France.

4. **Make sure that the major heading for a section (e.g., I, II, III) states the <u>main idea</u> that details support <u>rather than</u> just being the <u>first detail</u> in a list.** Sometimes the main idea isn't stated and you need to formulate it for yourself. For example,

I. The Anglo-Saxons created the basis of English. A. The Norwegians added words. B. The Normans added words.	**Should be ➔**	I. The English language developed when A. The Anglo-Saxons created its basis B. The Norwegians and Danes added words C. The Normans added French words.

5. **Do <u>not</u> use <u>too many headings</u> at any one level** (e.g., not A-Q). If you find too many items at one level, try to group them in larger categories. For example, if you have a long list of countries, it may make sense to group them by regions—Africa, Asia, etc.—or by another important characteristic—e.g., how they support their major idea.

I. Speakers of many languages had a hand in the development of English. A. German speakers . . . . B. Norwegian speakers C. Danish speakers . . . . D. Latin speakers . . . . E. French speakers . . . . F. Spanish speakers	**Should be ➔**	I. Speakers of many languages had a hand in the development of English. A. Speakers of Germanic languages . . . 1. German speakers . . . . 2. Norwegian speakers . . . . 3. Danish speakers . . . . B. Speakers of Romance languages . . . 1. Latin speakers . . . . 2. French speakers . . . . 3. Spanish speakers . . . .

6. **Do <u>not</u> outline <u>minor details</u>** (e.g., usually not below the 1, 2, 3 level unless the piece is quite long). In short papers (less that 1000 words long), even the 1, 2, 3, level is seldom needed.

FROM AN OUTLINE TO PARAGRAPHS OF A THEME'S BODY

There are several ways in which an outline can be translated into the paragraphs of the body of a theme. A writer has a range of freedom to decide where paragraphs begin and end. The three principles that should govern a writer's turning an outline into paragraphs of the body of the theme are these:

1. Make the paragraph construction clarify the relationship between main idea and support.
2. Make the paragraph lengths add to the ease of reading for your specific readers (shorter for less experienced readers).
3. Make the paragraphs of the body of a short theme of relatively similar length to support that impression that all portions of the body have received equal thought. (Long themes often have a variety of paragraph lengths in order to emphasize certain ideas or to break the monotony of a string of similar paragraphs.)

The following examples of translating an outline to paragraphs (indicated by the paragraph symbol ¶) illustrate several points. First, there is not a uniform translation of major points (**I**, **II**, etc.) or minor points (**A**, **B**, etc.) into topic sentences. In some cases the major points are included in the paper as ***supper topic sentences***, a term used here to indicate a major idea for a section of the theme that is composed of more than one paragraph. Second, although each outline has the same number of minor points (**A**, **B**, etc.) in each section, this uniformity is not necessarily a benefit in all outlines. Third, in addition to the patterns listed below, there are many others with the range of choices for writers.

OUTLINE	PARAGRAPHS OF THE BODY
BASIC FIVE-PARAGRAPH THEM PATTERN I. FIRST MAJOR SUPPORT A. First minor support B. Second minor support C. Third minor support II. SECOND MAJOR SUPPORT A. First minor support B. Second minor support C. Third minor support III. THIRD MAJOR SUPPORT A. First minor support B. Second minor support C. Third minor support	¶ 1: FIRST TOPIC SENTENCE First, second, and third minor supporting ideas with their details and illustrations. ¶ 2: SECOND TOPIC SENTENCE First, second, and third minor supporting ideas with their details and illustrations. ¶ 3: THIRD TOPIC SENTENCE First, second, and third minor supporting ideas with their details and illustrations.
SECOND CHOICE FOR A SHORT OUTLINE I. FIRST MAJOR SUPPORT A. First minor support B. Second minor support II. SECOND MAJOR SUPPORT A. First minor support B. Second minor support	¶ 1: FIRST ***SUPER*** TOPIC SENTENCE FIRST TOPIC SENTENCE and supporting details, etc. ¶ 2: SECOND TOPIC SENTENCE and supporting details, etc. ¶ 3: SECOND ***SUPER*** TOPIC SENTENCE THIRD TOPIC SENTENCE and supporting details, etc. ¶ 4: FOURTH TOPIC SENTENCE and supporting details, etc.

THIRD CHOICE—A MIXED PATTERN	
I. FIRST MAJOR SUPPORT A. First minor support	¶ 1: FIRST ***SUPER*** TOPIC SENTENCE FIRST TOPIC SENTENCE and supporting details, etc.
B. Second minor support	¶ 2: SECOND TOPIC SENTENCE and support
II. SECOND MAJOR SUPPORT A. First minor support B. Second minor support	¶ 3: THIRD TOPIC SENTENCE First and second minor supporting ideas with their details and illustrations.

WRITE AN EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION.

FUNCTIONS OF THE INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

Generally, the introduction and conclusion have three jobs: (1) state the thesis of the paper, (2) link that thesis to the interests of the readers, and (3) link the thesis to the main points of the body of the paper (points I, II, III, etc. on the outline). The numbers below indicate the order in which these jobs are most commonly done in the introduction and conclusion.

INTRODUCTION

1. Gets the readers into the subject and mood of the paper, clearly indicates the service the paper will perform for the readers.

2. Usually states the thesis of the paper (at least states its specific topic)

3. States the main points of the body of the paper (or the method of organization) in order to link the main points of the body to the thesis. (This step is called the statement of method.)

CONCLUSION

3. Takes the subject and feeling of the paper back to the readers' world, clearly shows that the writer has completed his service for the readers.

2. Usually restates the thesis of the paper.

1. Usually restates (summarizes) the main points of the body of the paper in order to show their relationship to the thesis of the paper.

VARIATIONS ACCORDING TO THE PAPER'S OBJECTIVE

INFORM:

1. Indicates the value of the information for the readers' profession, hobby, or satisfaction of their curiosity.	***3***. Emphasizes the value of the information.
3. Indicates specifically what readers can expect in the paper's body.	***1***. May emphasize the points in the body that are of most importance to the readers

PERSUADE:

1. States what is at stake to gain interest, sets the tone (feeling) of the paper	***3***. Emphasizes the effect of the thesis on the readers' lives, may call for action.
2. States the topic if the writer doesn't want to disclose his thesis immediately.	***2***. May state the degree of certainty of the thesis.
3. Explains the logical necessity of the main points of the body, may define some key terms.	***1***. May emphasize the most important arguments for the thesis.

ENTERTAIN:

1. Catches the readers' interests, sets the tone.	***3***. Ends with an emphatic point (like the punch line of a joke).
3. Hints at a statement of method.	***1***. Sums up the feeling more than the specifics of the body.

Most writers find it easiest to write a draft of the body of the paper first, the conclusion second, and the introduction last.

During evaluation of the paper, check to see that the introduction and conclusion are as consistent as possible in idea and in tone.

CHAPTER 25: FINDING AND COMBINING SOURCES—READING

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THE GOAL OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- Understand that illustrations from two or more independent sources are more convincing that just one illustration
- Identify significant similarities and differences between causes and effects of events in independent sources
- Support a main idea with concrete details from two independent sources—personal experience and a written account
- Write a summary
- Use a summary to find supporting details
- Compose a main idea sentence based upon a significant similarity or difference between events in two independent sources
- Use division and chronological patterns of organization
- Provide transitions to connect details from two similar or contrasting illustrations

REASONS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

We are sometimes required to write about topics from our own experience, as we have done in earlier chapters. However, instructors and employers usually expect us to integrate our experience with information from a variety of other sources. In the assignments in the following chapters, we will talk about a major critical thinking skill: how to synthesize information from different sources. Although the methods of arriving at main ideas are much the same as we have used in previous paragraph assignments, we will have to consider information from outside sources.

Business writing requires many critical thinking skills. One of the most important is the ability to combine information from different sources to arrive at and to support our opinions. An employer or client would have to have a lot of faith in us to accept a business recommendation based only on our own experience. Likewise, a person would have to have a lot of faith in another source if that were all that we used. Combining information from separate sources counteracts of two weaknesses in people's critical thinking. The first problem is that a source may misunderstand the reported information. In the case of information based on memory, a person's memory may be faulty. Our memories can fail because we confuse different memories or because an overpowering emotion or belief makes our memories of a particular situation conform to it. In the case of a written source, the writer may not report accurately because of faulty memory, writing, thinking, or observing. Even doctors, who have some of the most rigorous training available to any profession, can make mistakes of observation and reasoning about their observations. That is why we are wise to get a second opinion about a serious medical condition.

A combination of sources also helps overcome the second problem, which is that one source of information may not be trustworthy. Obviously, we trust our own honesty, but we have to recognize that almost everyone has at least shaded the truth at some time. If almost everyone has done that, our readers are justified in not trusting in an opinion based on information from just one source. It is reasonable to ask for a second source. Although there is always the possibility that two sources could both be inaccurate or untrustworthy, the probability is less that that for just one source.

College writing assignments have many of the same characteristics as business assignments. College instructors assign writing projects for several reasons. First, they ask us to find actual situations in our life and in our reading that illustrate the concepts of a course so that we can see for ourselves how the concepts apply to real-life situations. In these assignments both sources of information—our life and our reading—are important. Second, they ask us to select and combine reliable sources as a means of developing general critical thinking skills as well as the thinking skills that are specific to the discipline. For example, an anthropology instructor may evaluate your research paper on how well your illustrations

fit the principles of anthropology. But, in addition, the paper is likely to be evaluated on the number of sources you use and the reliability of those sources. For example, three sources in a paper would not be as good as nine, and an article from a professional anthropology journal would be more reliable than one from *Readers' Digest*.

The assignments in this chapter require just two sources. Although most business and college situations require several sources, using two sources is one step toward the goal of handling several.

LIMIT THE TOPIC.

Write a paper that supports an idea about PEOPLE IN GENERAL. Base the idea on both your experience and another person's experience reported in a published story.

Limit the paper to ONE IDEA or LESSON that you learned or that could be learned from the two experiences. Lessons taught from some experiences are very clear. But these lessons may also be considered so obvious as to be matters of fact. Lessons from other experiences may be less obvious, but, explained well, they are also more valuable to the readers. You also need to make sure that you do not try to cover all the lessons or ideas that can be learned from the situations you relate in your paper

In this paper—as in most papers—you have to be attentive to limiting the topic. For example, you might realize from your reading and thinking about your experience that children have several negative feeling when parents help without asking whether help is wanted. In this case don’t try to summarize all the feelings in one paper. Limit the topic to just one of those feelings. This severe limitation of a topic is emotionally hard on some writers because they are so committed to the ideas that they have discovered. They feel that omitting one part of their discovery is like abandoning their baby on the street. (If you feel that you really have to write about all your ideas, you could write a second or even a third paper on the other aspects of your thinking. After all, it seldom hurts to do more than is necessary for an assignment. And you may find that the second or third paper turns out better than the first one.)

CHOOSING A MAIN IDEA

Your paper needs to provide a clear statement of its main idea—a statement of a significant idea or lesson about people in general. Base the idea on your experience and the experience in one of the stories you have read. The main idea you write about here may be the one that you found as a common link between your experience and that of another person in the assignment in Chapter 20. Then again, you may have thought of another idea that would better serve as your main idea for this paper. As in other assignments, it should avoid matters of personal taste and ideas that are obvious enough to be considered matters of fact. Also avoid main ideas in which the topic or the key concept is too specific, general, or absolute.

THINKING ABOUT IT: FINDING THE BIG IDEA

In order to find the big idea—one significant enough to make a good main idea for a paper—you may find one or more of the following strategies helpful.

QUESTION YOUR DETAILS.

In searching for a significant idea for your main idea, you may benefit from asking questions about causes and effects similar to those listed in Chapter 20. Thinking about causes and effects can help you to answer questions about why life happens the way it does. Readers are appreciative of clearly reasoned answers to their questions about specific situations in life. Here are some specific questions you may want to answer:

CAUSES

1. What causes a person to be in this situation or acting in such a way?
2. What does this experience say about the personality, attitudes, or values of a person in this situation?
3. What does this experience say about past experiences of a person in this situation?
4. What kinds of actions by others can put a person in this kind of situation?

EFFECTS

1. How does this kind of experience affect the life of a person?
2. How can this kind of experience shape the personality, attitudes, or values of a person?
3. What does this experience indicate about future events for a person in this situation?
4. How should people deal with a person in this kind of situation?

If, for example, you were writing a paper about children resenting a parent's attempt to help, you might ask any one of these questions. Perhaps you recall your resentment of your parents and wish there had been a way to avoid it. The question then could be "How should people deal with a person (a child) in this kind of situation?" It may be that one illustration—either from your experience or from the story—showed an effective way of avoiding with this resentment. The contrast between the two situations would supply an answer to the question. This answer not only provides you with your main idea; it may also provide a way to avoid making your children resent your attempts to help.

WRITE AND EVALUATE SEVERAL POSSIBLE STATEMENTS OF THE MAIN IDEA: TAILOR THE STATEMENT TO THE READERS' INTERESTS AND TO THE FACTS.

A good main idea clearly fits both the facts and the interests of our readers. We sometimes have difficulty doing both things at the same time. We can benefit from understanding the ways in which our main idea can fail to do both jobs. In some situations the main idea claims too little: it talks too much about specific situations and not about the situations of our readers. In other cases the main idea claims too much: it talks about people and situations to which it does not truly apply. Here are the specific failings of a main idea:

- The main idea is too specific or narrow.
- The main idea is too general or broad.
- The main idea is unqualified—that is, applying to all or almost all situations when it would be more reasonable to claim that it applies to fewer cases.

A look at each of these failings will show the different ways in which a main idea can go astray. If you want another look at the definitions of the terms *specific* and *general,* you can check Chapter 18. Other terms often used as synonyms for *specific* and *general* are *narrow* and *broad*.

To understand how to work through these problems, let's assume that you are working with two people's experiences on camping trips that ended prematurely. On one of these trips a lack of precaution meant that bears were able to steal most of your food. On the other one a lack of a tent meant that the campers got drenched in a steady downpour. In discussing these experiences, you could choose "city dwellers" as the topic and nature's effect on them as the key concept.

THE MAIN IDEA CAN BE TOO SPECIFIC OR NARROW.

If you make the topic part of the main idea too specific, the main idea is less interesting to your readers. Look at these versions of a main idea:

MAIN IDEA	COMMENT
• When *we* and the *Smiths* went camping unprepared, nature sent *us* scurrying back to the city.	This main idea is too specific because it mentions specific people—*we, us*, and *Smiths*—the people in the stories and omits any other people (e.g., the readers) to whom the idea also applies.
• When people go camping without a tent and don't protect their food from bears, nature can send them scurrying home. • When city dwellers go camping unprepared, nature can send them scurrying back to their *warm, centrally heated rambler in the middle of a large city*.	These main ideas are too specific because they mention very specific details of the illustrating story—*tents* and *bears*; and *warm, centrally heated rambler in the middle of a large city*. These main ideas are too specific because the main idea of the paper could apply to those who experience different troubles and return to different homes.

THE MAIN IDEA CAN BE BROAD OR GENERAL.

On the other hand, main ideas that claim too much do not appeal to readers because they do not seem honest. If you make the topic too general, the main idea claims more than the story's details can support.

MAIN IDEA	COMMENT
• When city dwellers go camping, nature can send them scurrying back to the city.	This main idea may have some truth. But it is too general because the details of your story do not support it. The details of your story clearly indicate that you were **unprepared** for your encounter with nature.
• When city dwellers go camping unprepared, nature may give them a *nasty surprise*.	In this main idea, the *nasty surprise* could describe what happened. But it is general or broad enough that it could cover a host of other possibilities—such as injury or death—which the details of the paper do not address.

THE MAIN IDEA CAN BE UNQUALIFIED.

The term *unqualified* has some similarities to the terms *general* and *broad*. ***Unqualified*** refers to a statement that does not allow exceptions or degrees. An unqualified statement indicates that it is *always* true, is true of *all* items under discussion, or is unlimited in degree. For example, a statement like "*All* people need other people" is unqualified because it covers *all* people. And a statement like “His story is a *totally* untrue” is unqualified because it omits the fact that the story may have *some* truth in it. Here are some main ideas that fail because they are unqualified:

MAIN IDEA	COMMENT
• When *any* city dwellers go camping unprepared, nature can send them scurrying back to the city. • *Whenever* city dwellers go camping unprepared, nature sends them scurrying back to the city. • When city dwellers go camping unprepared, nature *always sends* them scurrying back to the city.	These main ideas are unqualified because the terms *any, whenever*, and *always* indicate that there are no or few exceptions to the general idea. Even if you left out the always in the last example, *sends* by itself could imply that the result always occurs. Since the details of the illustrating story include just two families' experiences, it does not provide adequate support for an unqualified main idea.

THE BEST MAIN IDEAS AVOIDS THESE EXTREMES.

After looking at all these criticisms of main ideas, you might finally arrive at a version that is more appropriate than any of your previous attempts:

> When city dwellers go camping unprepared, nature can send them scurrying back to the city.

This version is not too general or absolute because it talks of *unprepared* campers and says that nature *can* send them back to the city. It is not too specific because it doesn't mention any of the specifics of our experience.

MAIN IDEA EXERCISE 24-1: TOO NARROW, TOO GENERAL, AND UNQUALIFIED MAIN IDEAS

For each set of sentences identify the best main idea by eliminating the ones that are too specific, too general, or unqualified.

Set 1

1. A return to my grandmother's house made me feel how much I missed her.
2. A return to a place from a person's past will make her feel deeply what time has stolen from her.
3. A return to a place from a person's past can make her feel deeply what time has stolen from her.
4. A return to a place from a person's past can be devastating.
5. A return to a place from a person's past can make her feel deeply the loss of her beloved grandmother.

Set 2

1. Guilt is an heirloom that can be passed on from one generation to the next.
2. Guilt is an heirloom that is passed on from one generation to the next.
3. Guilt is an heirloom that stays in a family.
4. I am passing on to my children the heirloom of guilt that my mother passed on to me.
5. Attitudes toward life are heirlooms that can be passed on from one generation to the next.

Set 3

1. When they try to outsmart their parents, children sometimes outsmart themselves.
2. Sometimes, when they try to outsmart their parents, children only end up having to clean up a bigger mess in the kitchen.
3. Once, when I tried to get out of doing my chores, I only made my work harder.
4. When they try to outsmart their parents, children only outsmart themselves.
5. Sometimes, when they try to outsmart their parents, children cause unhappiness.

Set 4

1. In some situations parents can teach their children to say that they are sorry when they are not.
2. In many situations parents teach their children how to be hypocrites.
3. In some situations parents can teach their children how to be hypocrites.
4. My mother once put so much pressure on me that I said that I was sorry even though I wasn't.
5. In some situations parents can teach their children how to act inappropriately.

Set 5

1. Some children have such a dedication to the truth that it causes problems.
2. Most children have such a dedication to the truth that they suffer incredibly at the hands of others.
3. Some children have such a dedication to the truth that they suffer incredibly at the hands of others.
4. Once my father severely beat me with a leather strap because I wouldn't confess to stealing when I really didn't steal anything.
5. Some children have such a dedication to the truth that they are beaten with a leather strap.

LOOK FOR SIGNIFICANT SIMILARITIES OR DIFFERENCES.

As in previous assignments, this assignment challenges you to find a significant idea to write about. Because this paper requires two sources—your memory and your reading—you need to begin the assignment by comparing the two sources. If you have done the paper in Chapter 20 on connecting ideas from different sources, you have probably have found a significant similarity of difference. If you have not done that assignment or are not satisfied with the idea you noticed, check the sections entitled "SUMMARIZING A STORY," "WRITING A SUMMARY" in Chapter 20.

PAPER BODY

The body of the paper should contain supporting details from two experiences—yours and those of the writer of the story. The details you choose should emphasize one limited, qualified main idea. You may also choose some additional details to provide background and to emphasize the authenticity of the stories. However, you will probably not have much room for those details in a short paper that covers two people's experiences. The section of the paper that deals with the other person's story should mention the person's name and the source of the story (name of the story or the magazine, newspaper, or book) that it came from.

CONCRETE DETAILS

In reporting the concrete details of your experience, you can make the details as concrete as your memory and vocabulary can make them. The more concrete they are, the stronger the effect on your readers. In reporting details from the story, however, you cannot make the details any more concrete than those that the writer chose to include. If you were to make them more concrete, you would not be completely honest. If you were to make them less concrete, you would risk losing the effectiveness of the details. So, at least for part of the paper, the best result could come from reporting the exact words of the story. The writer's exact description of an object, an action, or a person's statement often contains the best support for your main idea. So to provide those exact statements of the writer, you will need to consult the original story rather than you're your summary of it. When you report what someone else has said or written, however, you need to put those words in quotation marks. You also need to be careful not to include your own wording in the quotation marks. (Check Chapter 12 for further information about using quotation marks and other punctuation marks used with quotations.) Although readers prefer concrete details, you

may have to summarize some portions of the story because there is not room to relate the whole story in your paper. When you choose to summarize, make sure that you avoid summarize critical parts of the story. Those critical parts—the ones that are the most dramatic or the most concrete illustrations of your main idea—should be quoted. Finally, you should avoid summarizing more than readers need to know to understand the idea in the main idea.

COMPARISONS, AND INFERENCE

You can more effectively present your examples by providing appropriate comparisons in both paragraphs of the body. As with the details, make sure that comparisons describing the other person's experience are honest and accurate. Inferences can play a larger role in the section that provides details of the other person's experience. Although you can tell your readers what you felt during your experience, the writer of the story may not have chosen to explain the feelings of the people in the story. In that case you will have to infer what a person felt from the details that are included in the story. This kind of inference is like those made about the live persons in the assignments of chapters 22 and 23.

USE DIVISION AND CHRONOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION.

The main idea should be very close to the beginning of the paper. Before your main idea, you may need a sentence or two of background to identify the kinds of situations that the main idea applies to. See Chapter 24 for information on how to organize a longer paper (or theme).

The rest of the paper should be divided roughly in half. Each half should report the details of one of the two experiences that illustrate the main idea. The two parts do not need to be exactly equal in length; however, if they are too unequal, you will give the impression that one of your examples is not a very good one. Generally, putting the better example first is the best strategy. The better one is the one that most forcefully illustrates the main idea.

Because each paragraph of the body relates an experience, it will probably follow a chronological (time) order. Just tell the events in the order in which they happened.

PROVIDE TRANSITIONS.

The main idea about people in general could be connected to the first example with terms like *example* or *instance*, or some other phrasing that communicates the same idea. (See Chapter 24 for more explanation.) At the beginning of the second paragraph of the body, a transition like *in addition*, *also, too, as well, additionally, moreover, further*, and *furthermore* should indicate a further example that supports the main idea. However, if the second example is a contrasting one, the contrast should be signaled with a transition like *however, on the other hand, in contrast*, or *nevertheless*. At the beginning of the second paragraph of the body, it may be in order to make some explicit reference to the idea of the main idea to keep the readers mindful of the point of the upcoming example. Throughout the whole paper make sure that the terms you use for your details help the readers to recall the key terms of the main idea. Within each paragraph of the body, chronological transitions could be helpful.

CONCLUSION 4 AND 5 CHECKLISTS

25. PLAN

- **DUE DATE IS _____**
- **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
  - **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the paper to ONE SPECIFIC IDEA or LESSON about people in general. But make sure that neither the main idea's topic nor its key concept is too specific, general, or unqualified.
  - Avoid matters of fact and personal taste.
  - State a reasoned opinion that the details clearly support.
- **REPORT 4:**
  - Use an assigned story.
  - Provide the page numbers (in parentheses) of the words of the story that you cite in the paper.
- **REPORT 5:**
  - Use a story of your choosing.
  - Provide a copy of the story you used.
  - Highlight or underline the words of the story that you cite in the paper.

26. ORGANIZE

- Devote about half of the body of the paper to each story illustration.
- Use time order (or another reasonable order) within each half of the body.
- Provide appropriate introduction and conclusion for the paper [Chapter 24].

27. WRITE—IN THE BODY OF THE PAPER INCLUDE

- **CONCRETE DETAILS:**
  - Identify the source of the story (title and author) and the person in the story.
  - Make sure all the details contribute to the support of the main idea or to the credibility of the reports.
  - Include quotations from the assigned story.
- **COMPARISONS:** Provide comparisons that support each main idea.
- **INFERENCES**: Explain clearly the significance of the details so that readers can easily see how they support each main idea.

28. EVALUATE AND REVISE

- **MAIN IDEA [THESIS SENTENCE]**
  - Limited, not a matter of fact or personal taste
  - Details clearly support the main idea.
  - Main idea is not too specific, too general, or unqualified.
- **ORGANIZATION**
  - Effective division of topic, use of chronological order, and introduction and conclusion.
- **DETAILS, COMPARISONS AND INFERNECES** provide adequate support for the main ideas.
- **TRANSITIONS**
  - Use *example*, *instance,* or other transitional phrases to connect the first person to the main idea.
  - Use *in addition, in contrast,* or another similar transition at the beginning of the second example.
  - Use repetition of the same or similar words to link each example to the key concept of each topic sentence and of the main idea.
- Use pronouns to signal that you are talking about the same person.
- Use chronological or other transitions where needed.
- **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**
- **SPECIAL ITEMS TO PROOFREAD FOR:**_____

CHAPTER 26: THEME—FINDING AND COMBINING SOURCES—INTERVIEWS

CHAPTER PREVIEW

THE GOAL OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO ENABLE YOU TO

- Understand that you can generate your own illustrations from two or more independent sources to support a conclusion
- Understand the importance of collaborating with others in supporting your conclusions
- Understand the importance of audience analysis in determining which ideas qualify as reasoned opinion and thus require support
- Improve your skill at identifying significant similarities and differences between causes and effects of events in independent sources
- Support a conclusion with concrete details from independent sources—personal experience and interviews
- Conduct a productive interview with a classmate or acquaintance
- Draw a conclusion based upon a significant similarity or difference between events in two independent sources

REASONS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

CONSULTING WITH OTHERS

This chapter's assignment requires gathering information from two sources and synthesizing (combining) the information to arrive at a significant opinion. The information you need to gather is about something that helps or hinders a college a student's effort to complete a degree. The major difference between this assignment and the last ones is that the second source of your information is other college students rather than your reading. To collect your information, you need to interview other college students—preferably those in your present writing class. The ability to conduct an effective interview is a skill that is important in most jobs. In most endeavors teamwork is a necessity. We work with others whose knowledge and participation are important to the success of the organization. We often have the responsibility to consult those with whom we work. In many cases we also have to go outside our organization to search for additional information from those who have had experience with the subject at hand. Knowing how to ask questions is vital to getting the information we need.

Our consultation with others takes two general forms. In the first form of consultation, we have the sole responsibility for reporting a recommendation or decision. In those cases we collect the relevant information from others and then draft and submit the report. In the second form, collecting the relevant information and drafting a report is just the beginning. We then have to submit the report to another individual or to a group to ensure that it accurately represents their interests and concerns about the topic. The final job is revising the report in response to those other people's recommendations. This assignment focuses primarily on the first kind of consultation. But you can usually improve your paper if have a study partner read your paper and provide you with constructive comments.

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

The topic of this assignment—helps and hindrances to a college career—brings up another important aspect of any writing job in the professional world and in college—audience analysis. *Audience analysis* is a term that is given more emphasis in speech classes than in writing classes, but the concept is important in all forms of communication. ***Audience analysis*** means identifying the person(s) with whom we wish to communicate and

determining the appropriate means of meeting their particular needs, interests, and abilities. For example, when talking to a college instructor, we would talk about the requirements of college life very differently that we would when talking to a prospective college student. These people have very different needs and interests in college students' success. Even if we were writing about something very different from college life, we would still write very differently for a group of people with college degrees than we would we would for those who had not graduated from high school. An important contrast between these groups is in the readers' abilities—the college graduates, on the average, would be more able to comprehend advanced vocabulary, long sentences and paragraphs, and complex relationships between ideas. The crucial term here is "on the average" because each individual has specific abilities and these abilities are not completely dependent upon years of schooling.

No matter what we are writing, we need to ask, "Who are my readers?" and "How do I meet their particular needs, interests, and abilities?" The answers to these questions can dramatically affect how we express our opinions. In addition, the fact that we need to ask the questions means that we need to modify some of the directions given for previous writing assignments. In those assignments, directions have consistently advised avoiding matters of personal taste and matters of fact or ideas that are so obvious that they are considered matters of fact. Though that advice is generally good advice, it is not complete. The advice about avoiding matters of personal taste applies to most writing situations. But when we are writing for close friends or relatives, talking about our personal tastes is perfectly acceptable. The difference between these readers and others is that these readers care for us as individuals and therefore care about our likes and dislikes. In addition, we need to clarify the advice about avoiding ideas that are so obvious that they are considered matters of fact. To be more accurate we should say that we should avoid opinions that are so obvious to our readers that *they consider them matters of fact.* The standard for matters of fact is not in our minds or in the minds of the whole world, but in the minds of those with whom we want to communicate.

Since many college writing situations are designed to prepare us for the work world, they also need to be clearly adapted for the needs of specific readers. Often instructors assign papers that are like those expected by readers in particular occupations or fields of study. For example, business, psychology, and sociology classes often require that you write reports on case studies. The goal here is to see what conclusions you can reach and what recommendations you would make. These case studies are rehearsals for writing for professionals in these particular fields.

Other writing assignments do not have a clear-cut parallel in the professional world. In those cases it seems that the only person we need to

write for is the instructor of the class. In many cases this is quite so. For example, when you are assigned a research paper in a class like history, it can have much the same purpose as an exam—to prove your understanding of history to your instructor. In other cases the situation is more complex. In those situations the instructor may ask you to write a paper as though it were intended for someone else—for example, a group of college students. The purpose here is to see whether you can meet the needs, interests, and abilities of those people. In some cases the instructor may also want to make the assignment seem less intimidating by indicating that you do not have provide ideas that are completely new to him or her. As long as your ideas are new or instructive to a certain person or group, the instructor considers them appropriate for the assignment. The assignment in this chapter belongs to this last category.

LIMIT THE TOPIC.

Write a paper that supports an idea about COLLEGE STUDENTS IN GENERAL. Base the idea on details of your experience and on the details of another person's experience which you gathered through interviews. The first choice of people to interview should be those in your writing class. They are people who probably have the most in common with you, and they will be more patient with your interview if you cooperate and let then interview you as well. You have other choices that may well help you: classmates in other classes, friends, or relatives at your college or at other colleges, friends or relatives that are recent college graduates, or even parents or others of the older generation who would not mind reminiscing with you about their college days.

Limit the paper to ONE significant IDEA or LESSON that could benefit a prospective college student AND that you can illustrate with details from both your experience and that of a person you interviewed. As in most papers in which you combine information from different sources, you should be particularly careful in limiting the topic. Don't try to solve all the aspects of a problem of college students. Try to focus on what you can adequately illustrate with concrete details within the limits of the paper.

CHOOSING A MAIN IDEA

Your paper needs to provide a clear statement of its main idea—a statement of a significant idea or lesson about college students in general. Base the idea on your experience and the experience one of your interviewees. Avoid main ideas in which the topic or the key concept is too specific, general, or absolute. (See Chapter 25 for more details about this topic.) Also avoid

matters of personal taste and ideas that are obvious enough that prospective college students would consider them matters of fact. To determine whether an idea or lesson is appropriate for a prospective college student, analyze the experiences that you and your interviewee had. Any idea that now seems significant to both of you and that came as a surprise to the both of you would qualify as profitable for a prospective college student. Besides entirely new ideas, you should consider ideas that are vary from your expectations in degree. For example, prospective college students anticipate that studying for college classes would affect their other activities. But many of them are not aware until they get to college how drastically studies can affect those activities. So an appropriate idea might be one phrased like this, "Studying for a full load of classes takes up so much of a student's time that . . ." The rest you have to fill in with a very clear description of the affect that studying can have on other activities.

THINKING ABOUT IT: FINDING THE BIG IDEA

In order to find the big idea—one significant enough to make a good conclusion for a paper—you may find one or more of the following strategies helpful.

QUESTION YOUR DETAILS.

When you look for significant similarities and differences between your experiences and those of another student, you may get some help looking at questions of cause and effect as in previous assignments.

CAUSES

5. What causes a college student to be in this situation or acting in such a way?
6. What does this experience say about the personality, attitudes, or values of a college student in this situation?
7. What does this experience say about past experiences of a college student in this situation?
8. What kinds of actions by others can put a college student in this kind of situation?

EFFECTS

5. How does this kind of experience affect the life of a college student?
6. How does this kind of experience shape the personality, attitudes, or values of a college student?
7. What does this experience indicate about the future events for a college student in this situation?
8. How should people deal with college student in this kind of situation?

LOOK FOR SIGNIFICANT SIMILARITIES OR DIFFERENCES: INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

In this assignment you need to take an even more active role in searching your source of information than you did in the assignment in Chapter 25. In this case the information is contained within another person, and your interactions with that person will determine whether you get the information you need.

PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW.

Before you set off for an interview, make sure you are prepared. Preparing for an interview normally requires research. But here since the topic deals with personal experiences, the research is relatively easy. Mentally review your experiences in college, and identify several that you would like to pursue in interviews with other students. You could think about problems that you have had or solutions you have discovered. From all these topics, select the ones that seem most likely to be shared with other students. For the main topics write out several questions you feel will draw out concrete details that will be useful in writing the paper. Generally open-ended questions, rather than yes-no questions get more details from people. For example, don't ask, "Have your outside activities suffered because of your studies?" Instead, ask "How have your studies restricted your outside activities?"

BE FLEXIBLE.

Effective interviewing requires a fair amount of flexibility. For example, some people are reluctant to talk about themselves, so a more indirect approach may help to get them started. If you feel that the interviewee is bashful or reluctant to talk, he or she may not respond well to "How have

your studies restricted *your* outside activities?" In that case you might start with "How do *students'* studies restrict *their* outside activities?" Then later you can ask for examples of the interviewee's ideas. He or she may have examples of other people, but most likely the examples that will come to mind will be from his or her own experience. By that time the person may feel comfortable enough to talk about personal incidents. In addition, the first person you interview may not be too talkative, or you may not have mastered the approach to interviewing, so you need to be prepared to interview several people. You need to give yourself a chance to mature as an interviewer, and you may need a wide range of interviewees to get some usable information.

BE SENSITIVE TO YOUR INTERVIEWEE.

When you talk to people, be sensitive to their situation, and let them know you understand their situation. Often you can get better responses if you begin with a comment or question that shows a common bond between you and the interviewee. For example, if your question is about the lack of time for outside activities, you might start with a quick comment about how you had to drop an activity because of studies. Then you could ask whether the other student had had similar experiences. Being sensitive also means reading non-verbal communication. A person's tone of voice, facial expression, or posture may tell you more about how she feels about a topic than her words do. For example, if a student starts squirming when you bring up the subject of grades, you might infer that the topic is a sore one for her, perhaps even that she is failing her classes. This student may be more comfortable if questions are phrased in terms of students in general. You may also decide that you have to change the topic or go on to another student to find your information.

FOLLOW UP WITH MORE QUESTIONS.

One essential skill good interviewers develop is the ability to use follow-up questions to get the concrete, factual details that they need. If for example, your interviewee says that she had to drop several outside activities because of college work, you should ask, "What activities did you drop out of?" As with opening questions, you should avoid asking yes-no questions. For example, a question like, "Do you miss the bowling league you dropped out of?" gives the interviewee a chance to say *no* or to give a vague answer. Instead, ask, "What do you miss most about the bowling league that you dropped out of?" This question makes the reasonable assumption that the other student participated in the league for a reason and focuses her attention on identifying it. Sometimes you have to go to great lengths following up with additional questions to get the details you need. For

example, your interviewee may have said that what she missed the most about dropping bowling was not seeing her friends in the league. At this point you could ask whether she sees them anywhere else since dropping out of the league. You might get some concrete details like these, "No, I haven't see any of them in the year since I started college, not even my best friend from high school." This kind of detail shows the severity of the sacrifices college students make to do well in school. Finally, be prepared to ask follow-up questions about unexpected topics. Often in interviews our interviewee provides an observation that is more striking than our own ideas.

TAKE NOTES QUICKLY AND REVIEW THEM IMMEDIATELY.

While you are asking questions, write yourself notes about the person's answers. Be aware that if you spend too much time writing down a person's responses, he or she will become bored and want to end the interview as quickly as possible. You may be able to note just the key words. Abbreviations can help to shorten long words. These techniques of taking short notes work, however, only if you very quickly return to your notes and write them out in detail. Rewriting them immediately after the interview will also help you to remember some important details that you didn't have time to note during the interview.

PAPER BODY

The body of the paper should contain supporting details from two experiences—yours and those of an interviewee. The details you choose should emphasize your main idea. The paragraph of the body that deals with the other student's experience should mention at least the person's first name and your association with him or her—for example, "Julia, a classmate in Appreciation of Art, told me . . ."

CONCRETE DETAILS

In choosing concrete details for this paper, you should select the details from your interview first, since they give you limited choices. Because you have fewer details to work with, finding the right ones is usually easier. Also, starting with the other person's story gives you another advantage. You can use the wider range of choices from your own experience to either reinforce or contrast with the details from another student. If the main idea is based on a similarity, you might not want to make your example sound exactly like that of the other student. A range of experiences will help to show how broad the problem is or how broadly applicable a solution is.

This breadth of the idea adds to its significance. If the main idea is based on a difference, however, a greater similarity in all the details except for one crucial detail is often better. The similarity helps to make that one detail stand out as the significant one—the one that can be more clearly identified as the problem or the solution.

You want details from your interviewee to be as concrete as possible. You cannot make them be any more concrete than what you have recorded. So you should be conscientious about recording what an interviewee says during the interview and filling out the details of his or her statements very soon after the interview. If you have been conscientious, you may cite the person's comments in quotation marks—implying that they are as exact as a person can make them under the circumstances. If you are not sure about the accuracy of the phrasing, state the ideas in your own words and do not use quotation marks.

COMPARISONS, AND INFERENCE

You can more effectively present your examples by providing appropriate comparisons in both parts of the paper. Just don't put words into the mouth of your interviewee. Inferences can play an important role in the part of the paper that provides details of the other person's experience. Your notes about the comments may not be the only information that you can use in this assignment. In addition to what a person says, her tone of voice, facial expression, or posture may tell you a great deal about her feelings about what she says. An obvious example would be a situation in which your interviewee says that she has not seen her best friend from high school for the whole year she has been in college and gets a tear in her eye. The tear in her eye tells you how deeply she feels about this fact. Both the tear and your inference about it can play an important part in this section of the paper. For more information about these inferences see the explanations in chapters 22 and 23.

USE DIVISION AND CHRONOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION.

The main idea should be stated near the beginning of the paper. Before your main idea, you may need a sentence or two of background to identify the kinds of situations that the main idea applies to. See Chapter 24 for information on how to organize a longer paper (or theme).

The rest of the paper should be divided roughly in half. Each half should report the details from one of the two experiences that illustrate the main idea. The two paragraphs of the paper's body should be roughly equal in length. Generally, it is good to put the better example first. Because each paragraph of the body relates an experience, it will probably follow a chronological (time) order. In describing details of specific situations, progressive order sometimes works better.

PROVIDE TRANSITIONS.

The main idea about people in general could be connected to the first example with a term like *example* or *instance*, or some other phrasing that communicates the same idea. (See Chapter 24 for more explanation.) At the beginning of the second paragraph of the body, a transition like *in addition*, *also, too, as well, additionally, moreover, further*, and *furthermore* should indicate a further example that supports the main idea. However, if the second example is a contrasting one, the contrast should be signaled with a transition like *however, on the other hand, in contrast*, or *nevertheless*. At the beginning of the second paragraph of the body, it may be in order to make some explicit reference to the idea of the main idea to keep the readers mindful of the point of the upcoming example. Throughout the whole paper make sure that the terms you use for your details help the readers to recall the key terms of the main idea. Within each paragraph of the body, chronological transitions could be helpful.

CONCLUSION 6 CHECKLIST

29. PLAN

- **DUE DATE IS _____**
- **LENGTH AND FORMAT**
  - **LIMIT THE TOPIC:** Limit the paper to ONE SPECIFIC IDEA or LESSON about college students.
  - State the main idea IN TERMS OF STUDENTS IN GENERAL, not in terms of yourself or the other student.
  - Avoid matters of fact and personal taste.
  - State a reasoned opinion that the details clearly support.
  - Illustrate the idea with concrete details from both your experience and another student's experience.

30. ORGANIZE

- Devote about half of the body of the paper to each experience (illustration).

- Use time order (or another reasonable order) within each half of the body.
- Provide appropriate introduction and conclusion for the paper [Chapter 24].

31. WRITE—IN THE BODY OF THE PAPER INCLUDE

- **CONCRETE DETAILS:**
  - Identify the other student by first name and your association with him or her.
  - Make sure all the details contribute to the support of the main idea or to your credibility as a reporter of those details.
  - Include quotations from the interview, if possible.
- **COMPARISONS:** Provide comparisons that support each main idea.
- **INFERENCES**:Explain clearly the significance of the details so that readers can easily see how they support each main idea.

32. EVALUATE AND REVISE

- **MAIN IDEA [THESIS SENTENCE]**
  - Limited, not a matter of fact or personal taste
  - Details clearly support the main idea.
  - Main idea is not too specific, too general, or unqualified.
- **ORGANIZATION**
  - Effective division of topic, use of chronological order, and introduction and conclusion.
- **DETAILS, COMPARISONS AND INFERNECES** provide adequate support for the main ideas.
- **TRANSITIONS**
  - Use *for example*, *for instance* or other transitional phrases to connect the first person's experience to the main idea.
  - Use *in addition*, *in contrast*, or another similar transition at the beginning of the second example.
  - Use words that link details of each example to the key terms of each topic sentence.
  - Use chronological or other transitions where needed.
- **Proofread out loud and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.**
- **Have a study partner read and evaluate your paper.**
- **SPECIAL ITEMS TO PROOFREAD FOR:_____**

APPENDIX A EXERCISE ANSWERS

CHAPTER 18

CONCRETE WORK EXERCISE 1

CONCRTETE, ABSTRACT

1. Levi's 501s, clothing
2. Pork chop, nutrition
3. CBS Evening News, communication
4. English Composition learning
5. Hong Kong flu, disease
6. Riverside Apartments, structure
7. Accord, conveyance
8. Oolong tea, liquid

9. American English, communication
10. *American Heritage Dictionary*, book
11. Sky blue, color
12. Mom, person
13. Living will, paper
14. Mt. St. Helens eruption, bad thing
15. Senator Sanders, citizen
16. Safeway, commerce
17. Vacation lot, place
18. Migraine, discomfort
19. Criminal, bad
20. Nutritious, good

CONCRETE WORK EXERCISE 2

1. *Time* magazine, publication
2. Strut, go
3. Japanese lace-leaf maple, vegetation
4. Tacoma Community College, institution
5. Voyager, vehicle
6. Erect, produce
7. Professor, person
8. Dr. Anthony Fauci, healthcare professional
9. International orange, bright
10. *Spirit of St Louis*, aircraft

11. Nest, usefulness
12. Bagel, food
13. Londoner, human
14. Puget Sound, salt water
15. Granny Smith, nourishment
16. Interstate 5, way
17. Big Bang Theory, electronic medium
18. Lassie, pet
19. Pepsi One, beverage
20. Tarantula, crawling thing

INFERENCE EXERCISE

1. Sentence 3
2. Sentence 1
3. Sentence 1
4. Sentence 3
5. Sentence 1
6. Sentence 2
7. Sentence 3
8. Sentence 1

CHAPTER 21

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE 21-2 [NO SCORING]

The front door of the red house in	topic sentence, **topic**
Longbranch *must have been opened for*	*key concept*
many CHILDREN over the years. (2) *LITTLE*	*key concept (CHILDREN*
FEET have cut a path from the play yard	*MENTIONED)*
at the right of the **house**, across the grass, up	directional link, **topic**
the steps and over the porch to the front **door**.	organizational sentence directional link, **topic**
(3) On the **porch**	*key concept*
the path*, cut through the dull paint*, is	*key concept*, directional
partly	link
blockaded by CHILDREN'S TOYS. (4) To the	*key concept*
right of the	transition,
path, *sits a red and white TRICYCLE* with	*key concept,* **topic**
one lopsided wheel. (5) Also, a rainbow of	transition, *key concept*
brightly colored *PLASTIC BLOCKS arcs*	directional link, **topic**
across the path and the left half of the	**topic**, *key concept*
porch. (6) Moreover, the red paint has	
been *worn away* from	**topic**, *key concept*
the right side of the **door sill**, and even	*key concept,* transition
some of the wood of the **sill** seems to	**topic**
have been rubbed away by the feet of the	*key concept*
CHILDREN who have shuffled over it. (7)	directional link, **topic**,

The screen of the screen **door** has been *pushed out of its frame by* LITTLE HANDS. (8) *DIRTY FINGERS have* also *left smudges* around the screen **door's** handle and around the doorbell. (9) The *FINGERS have made more smudges* on the glass of the narrow window on the right of the **door** as *THEIR OWNERS* have waited for someone to open the **door**.	*key concept* Topic sentence recalled, **topic**

APPENDIX B

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